Correspondence
With the Holy See
Relative to
Maltese Affairs

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Holy See No. 1 (1930)

Correspondence with the Holy See

relative to

MALTESE AFFAIRS

January 1929 to May 1930

Presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
to Parliament by Command of His Majesty

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Correspondence with the Holy See relative to Maltese Affairs.

January 1929 *to May* 1930.

No. 1.

Resolution adopted by the Maltese Legislative Assembly on January 24, 1929.

RESOLVED that in view of the facts :—

(1) That false statements and groundless accusations against the Head of the Ministry and the Government have been made in and out of Parliament in connexion with the case of Father Guido Micallef, to the prejudice of public order and of the relations which should exist between the Government of Malta and the Ecclesiastical Authorities;

(2) That the said case of Father Guido Micallef is the subject of an appeal to the Vatican where it is still under consideration;

And whereas grave injury would be caused to both Church and State if undue weight were to be given to any *ex parte* statement, or the case were to be prejudged or prejudiced by any false step in procedure;

A humble address be presented to his Excellency the Governor praying him to submit, through the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and the Colonies, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a humble request to the Vatican to send a fully authorised representative to Malta to take evidence on oath with reference to the aforesaid case of Father Guido Micallef and the circumstances connected therewith.

E. PETROCOCCHINO,
Clerk of the Parliament.

No. 2.

The Cardinal Secretary of State to Mr. Chilton.

(Translation.) *Vatican, February* 23, 1929.

THE undersigned, Cardinal Secretary of State of His Holiness, has the honour to request your Excellency to be so kind as to communicate to His Britannic Majesty's Government, that the Holy See has learned with keen regret and surprise what has happened in Malta as regards arrangements concerning the Franciscan religious, Guido Micallef.

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For serious reasons of disciplinary ecclesiastical order the lawful superior of the above-mentioned religious, the representative of the Curia generalizia of Rome, had ordered Micallef to move from Malta to another convent of the order outside the island.

The latter, however, did not remove himself, finding a pretext for his disobedience to the hierarchy of the Church in the dispositions of the local Government authority who prevented his departure and who tried to justify publicly their attitude on the ground of the inexistent political motives.

It is not necessary that I should lay stress to your Excellency on the gravity of behaviour which tends directly to hinder the free exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in matters with regard to the religious life of a friar; nor will your Excellency fail to realise the serious consequences to ecclesiastical discipline which such an action of the civil authorities may lead to and which might encourage such disobedience. Therefore the undersigned Cardinal begs your Excellency to use his good offices with His Britannic Majesty's Government in order that appropriate instructions may be given to the Maltese authorities in order to reassure the Holy See as also the conscience of Catholics in the island.

The undersigned avails, &c.

CARDINAL GASPARRI.

No. 3.

Mr. Chilton to the Cardinal Secretary of State.

British Legation to the Holy See,
Rome, March 1, 1929.

My Lord Cardinal,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge your Eminence's note of the 23rd February, and to state that, on enquiry, I find that no obstacle is being put by the Maltese Government in the way of Father Micallef's departure. I venture, however, to remark that, according to information from Malta, the condemnation of this priest, a British subject, to leave British territory at the command of Father Carta, a foreigner, has caused a certain amount of popular indignation, which has been a source of embarrassment to His Majesty's Government. The latter, however, certainly have no wish to be drawn into any discussion of this particular case, nor do they desire to intervene in the internal disciplinary affairs of monastic orders, which are naturally mainly the concern of the properly constituted religious authorities. The general unsatisfactory state of affairs in Malta, however, of which the case of Father Micallef is apparently a sign, is viewed with some concern by His Majesty's Government, and I have received instructions to represent this to your Eminence. His Majesty's Government, having carefully considered the whole question, have decided that present conditions in Malta seem to be such as would justify an independent investigation by the Holy See, and I therefore have the honour to request your Eminence to consider whether an

Apostolic Visitor could not be sent to the island in order to investigate the whole question of the relations of the ecclesiastical authorities in Malta to the political Government, having regard to the importance of avoiding friction in the future as a consequence of the intervention of Maltese priests in politics.

It is understood, and your Eminence has emphasised this, that the Holy See wishes to discourage political agitation by priests. The disregard of this rule, and the intense participation of Maltese priests in local politics, it is considered, lie at the root of the present trouble, and the probability is that this trouble will continue, whichever party may happen to hold office, until such political activity is ended. Without in any way, therefore, wishing to intervene in the particular case of Father Micallef, His Majesty's Government feel that the time has come for a general enquiry by the Holy See on the lines I have indicated, and I have the honour to request that this view may be given favourable consideration.

I avail, &c.
H. G. CHILTON.

No. 4.

The Cardinal Secretary of State to Mr. Chilton.

(Translation.)

Your Excellency, *Vatican, March* 9, 1929.

I HAVE received your Excellency's note of the 1st instant in which, after referring to the question of Father Micallef, you inform me that the Government of Malta has not placed any obstacle in the way of the departure of the said Father from the island, and that His Majesty's Government have no desire either to interfere in the case of the Father in question nor to intervene in the internal disciplinary affairs of the monastic orders, affairs which are within the competence of the religious authorities. Nevertheless, your Excellency, in view of the present difficulties in Malta, requests in the name of His Majesty's Government that a Visitor Apostolic should be sent to investigate the whole question of the relations between the ecclesiastical authorities and the political Government of Malta, with the object of avoiding friction in the future.

Your Excellency's note was referred to the Holy Father and considered with the attention and deliberation which matters so important demand, and His Holiness has now instructed me to represent the following to your Excellency :—

First of all the Holy Father is grateful to His Majesty's Government for the declaration, of which he has taken note with

satisfaction, that they do not intend to interfere in the disciplinary affairs which are within the competence of the ecclesiastical authorities, and that they have not placed any obstacle in the way of the decisions of the said ecclesiastical authorities.

As to the despatch of a Visitor to investigate the action of the local ecclesiastics and to put an end to the existing friction between the ecclesiastical authorities and the Maltese Government, His Holiness is well disposed to a step which should secure what is desired as soon as possible. He considers, however, that a simple Visitation Apostolic in the present state of excitement in the minds of the people could not take place with such serenity and objectivity as would produce efficacious and lasting results. Rather would the Holy Father desire to send to Malta his own Delegate Apostolic, who would be charged to make a study of the situation on the spot, so as to remove the possible abuses which are said to have crept in among the clergy regular and secular, and further so as to encourage friendly and durable relations with the governing authorities of the island from whom it is hoped more regard towards the Church may be forthcoming.

For this mission the Holy Father would choose Mgr. Paschal Robinson, Archbishop of Tyana, who must certainly be *persona grata* to the British Government, and who has in the past carried out a number of delicate missions in British territory to the full satisfaction both of the Holy See and of the British Government. He would have the title of Delegate Apostolic and would be able to leave for Malta even as early as next week.

In hastening to communicate all the foregoing to your Excellency, I would beg that it should be conveyed to His Majesty's Government, and that I may be favoured with a reply as soon as possible.

I avail, &c.

P. Card. GASPARRI.

No. 5.

Mr. Chilton to Sir Austen Chamberlain.

(Telegram.) *March* 9, 1929.

Vatican have decided to send to Malta not merely Visitor Apostolic but Delegate Apostolic with full authority from the Pope, and have chosen Mgr. Pascal Robinson, late Visitor Apostolic to Palestine. I presume the choice will be most agreeable to His Majesty's Government, but Vatican request early reply.

No. 6.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Chilton.

(Telegram.) *Foreign Office, March* 11, 1929.

Your telegram of 9th March.

His Majesty's Government approve most cordially.

No. 7.

Sir J. Du Cane to Mr. Amery.

(Extracts.)

Sir, *The Palace, Valletta, May* 29, 1929.

I have the honour to report that Mgr. Robinson, titular Archbishop of Tyana, arrived here as Apostolic Delegate from the Holy See on the 3rd April. He proposes to leave Malta on Wednesday, the 29th instant, after accomplishing the object of his mission in a most satisfactory manner.

2. He has exchanged views with me personally on several occasions, has interviewed members of all political parties and many prominent citizens, and has, in fact, conducted a most thorough enquiry into the relations between Church and State in Malta with marked courtesy and tact.

3. As a result of the discussions that have taken place with Ministers, notes have been drafted, which it is suggested may form the basis for a protocol or concordat between His Majesty's Government and the Holy See.

4. I have myself exchanged views with his Grace on these notes, and am in a position to say that, in his opinion, the differences which have arisen between the present Government and the ecclesiastical authorities in Malta can best be dealt with in their more important aspects by a definite concordat, which would necessarily be respected by both parties.

5. At the same time his Grace has informed me that, whereas he cannot commit the Vatican to the acceptance of all the solutions proposed in the notes, the most friendly discussion is to be anticipated between Cardinal Gasparri and Mr. Chilton on the subject.

8. Ministers desire me to emphasise the importance of an early discussion and solution of this question. A general election is

probable before this time next year and the desirability of finding a solution of the principal points at issue before an election takes place need not be laboured. I suggest, therefore, that the Foreign Office be moved to convey early authority to Mr. Chilton to negotiate with the Vatican on the basis of the notes, provided that the views contained therein are approved by His Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.
J. P. DU CANE, *Governor.*

No. 8.

Mr. A. Henderson to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(Telegram.) *Foreign Office, June* 27, 1929.

Lord Strickland arrives at Hotel Continental, Rome, on morning of 5th July for two days with private secretary Mr. Harris Colt.

Please inform Mr. Chilton and tell him that Lord Strickland will be obliged if he will arrange an interview for him with Cardinal Secretary of State on either 5th or 6th July.

No. 9.

Cardinal Gasparri to Mr. Chilton.

(Translation.) *Vatican, July* 2, 1929.

The undersigned Cardinal Secretary of State of His Holiness deems it opportune to transmit to your Excellency copy of the letter which he has recently addressed to the Bishops of Malta and of Gozo, together with the résumé of a pro-memoriâ sent to the Holy See by eye-witnesses of the activities of Lord Strickland at Malta.

The actual object of this letter is publicly to inform the Maltese people that Lord Strickland is not *persona grata* to the Holy See, as he pretends to be, and that the Holy See itself entirely supports the action of the ordinaries of Malta and of Gozo in their disapproval of the activities of Lord Strickland, which are not in accordance with the Catholic Church and the ecclesiastical authority of the island. The memorial points out all the harm done by Lord Strickland to the prestige and popularity of England in Malta.

The undersigned therefore begs your Excellency to be so good as to decide whether or not this matter is one which should be brought to the knowledge of His Majesty's Government, since, also in view of the harm which Lord Strickland's activities occasion to the Imperial Government, the latter will no doubt adopt such measures as they may consider necessary to prevent such subversive activity, or at least to divorce their responsibility from that of Lord Strickland.

The undersigned, &c.

P. Card. GASPARRI.

Enclosure 1 in No. 9.

Résumé of an Aide-mémoire addressed by Eye-witnesses to the Holy See on Activities of Lord Strickland in Malta.

From information given to the Holy See and based on notes taken on the spot, it appears that the present situation in Malta presents considerable gravity. It appears that Lord Strickland, who holds his office not by nomination of the Imperial Government, but by mandate received from the people, exceeds such a mandate in not having any regard for the laws or for the rights and feelings of the clergy and of the Catholic population. Reliable witnesses do not hesitate to declare that Malta is at present subjected to a régime of terror and despotism, in which the Opposition in Parliament is disarmed and its press gagged, the courts threatened, justice suspended, the Constitution in danger, the country in a ferment, the Church and religion openly insulted and opposed. The same witnesses point out that, although Lord Strickland claims to be the champion of Imperial British prestige, in reality he is acting in contradiction to the best traditions of the Empire and is damaging its real interests. The anti-clerical and anti-Maltese campaign to which he has set himself has already aroused sufficiently serious discontent and disorders which may shortly give way to the most dire consequences. Also, in fomenting class hatred in the island, he will end by demoralising and exasperating the population, and the disrespect he adopts towards the ecclesiastical authorities will teach the people to disrespect also the civil authorities.

Enclosure 2 in No. 9.

Cardinal Gasparri to Mgr. Caruana and Mgr. Gonzi.

(Translation.)

Most Reverend Excellencies, *Vatican, June* 30, 1929.

The Holy Father has learned with great satisfaction that a large group of Maltese Catholics, led by their bishops, is coming to Rome on a pilgrimage in August. His Holiness has desired me immediately to write this letter so that your Excellencies may come already informed as to the grave questions which are agitating the minds of the people in Malta, in order that His Holiness may profit by your presence in Rome fully to discuss these questions.

Meanwhile, the Holy See, having learned from the reports of Monsignore the Apostolic Delegate all the gravity of the situation, expresses the desire that the reverend ordinaries will continue, with the necessary firmness joined to the necessary prudence, in the line of conduct held until now against the attitude of some of the authorities in the Maltese Ministry. These latter, whilst publicly declaring themselves Catholic and devoted to the Holy See, are, in fact, following a line of action actually hurtful to religion and to the most sacred Catholic traditions of Malta. The offences are specially directed against the clergy, whose prestige it is sought to diminish, thus destroying the salutary influence which they have always exercised over this faithful populace. And finally they have dared to attack them in the public press and in Parliament, and have not spared even the bishops.

Confronted by such a painful state of things, which is of such long date and which neither the patience of the bishops nor their moderation and prudence as well as their just protests have been able to remedy, the Holy Father can no longer be silent. His Holiness, since last winter, has openly showed his disapproval of this action, refusing, in spite of all insistence, to receive in audience two personages of the above-mentioned Ministry, when they visited Rome. And now His Holiness assures me that he will not fail to add these further encouragements and assistance, which shall serve to obtain the cessation of actions not less hurtful to religion than to the higher Maltese authority, towards whom the people have always shown such cordial deference.

But since the amelioration of this painful situation cannot be obtained by human means alone, without the intervention of special grace and divine assistance, the Holy Father invites the faithful in Malta, and more especially those who are preparing for their pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Apostles, to intensify their prayers. May the Apostle, St. Paul, whose anniversary is being celebrated to-day and who is so dear to this good people, obtain from the Eternal Shepherd of Souls this so much desired change.

I avail, &c.

P. Card. GASPARRI.

No. 10.

Resolution adopted by the Maltese Legislative Assembly on July 25, 1929.

The Legislative Assembly, on the memorandum signed by the Ministers* in reference to communications by the Cardinal Secretary of State to the Vatican on certain questions affecting the relations between Church and State in these islands:—

1. Deplores that the said communications and the action taken in pursuance thereof, have reopened and accentuated the unfortunate tension, between the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities in these islands, which the House had confidently hoped and anticipated would have been definitely removed, to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, in the interests of both Church and State, as the result of the recent mission of the Apostolic Delegate who was graciously appointed by His Holiness the Sovereign Pontiff at the request of the Government on a resolution of this House.

2. Reaffirms its filial and unalterable devotion to the Holy See and its dutiful allegiance in all matters purely spiritual.

3. Asserts the exclusive right of the Parliament of Malta as a self-governing unit of the British Empire, to deal with purely civil affairs without outside interference.

4. Endorses the contents of the above-mentioned memorandum of the Ministers, and expresses its full confidence in the Government.

5. The House further resolves that this resolution be forwarded to the Officer Administering the Government with a request that his Excellency may be pleased to transmit it to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Dominions and Colonies, to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to his Excellency the British Minister at the Vatican and to His Eminence the Cardinal Secretary of State to the Vatican.‡

No. 11.

Memorandum from Maltese Ministers with reference to the Letter published by His Grace the Archbishop of Malta and His Lordship the Bishop of Gozo on July 11, 1929, reproducing a Letter from His Eminence Cardinal Gasparri dated "Vatican, June 30, 1929," on Relations between Church and State in these Islands, July 19, 1929.

Ministers have been surprised by the publication of the aforesaid letter† and are grieved by its contents in so far as it refers to them personally.

* See No. 11. † Enclosure 1

‡ Not transmitted to the Cardinal Secretary of State.

2. Ministers note with satisfaction that former imputations as to their having incurred, or deserved, excommunication have been definitely dissipated by the letter of the Cardinal Secretary of State. It is also evident, from the tenor thereof, that the Holy See has realised the malice of the false accusation that the head of the Ministry is a freemason. On the other hand, the letter contains other imputations which, in the opinion of Ministers, should not have been entertained after the visit and enquiry of Mgr. Robinson, the Apostolic Delegate, who recently investigated in this island the matters under consideration and had before him detailed confutation which at the time appeared to be unreservedly accepted.

3. For this reason, Ministers feel in duty bound, as loyal and devoted sons of the Church, to place on record such facts as should dispel misunderstandings and misconceptions, especially in regard to their Catholic Faith.

4. The surprise of Ministers was intensified by the fact that they had been clearly warned by Mgr. Robinson that, owing to many pressing questions confronting the Vatican, considerable time would have to elapse before the Holy See would be able to turn its attention to Maltese affairs, and decide the questions submitted through the Apostolic Delegate.

5. For that reason, Ministers had urged, through the proper channels, the expediency of arriving at a speedy solution of at least the most important of these questions, never imagining that a preliminary pronouncement had already been prepared and transmitted to the Bishops of Malta and Gozo for publication, without an opportunity having been given to Ministers to reply to unexpected charges made against them in that pronouncement.

6. When Lord Strickland was in Rome on the 5th and 6th July last on his return from London, His Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary accredited to the Holy See asked and obtained for him from the Cardinal Secretary of State an opportunity of perusing that pronouncement and of making his remarks on the letter to the bishops and on the note and evidence with which it had been sent to Mr. Chilton.

7. Lord Strickland in a statement which is attached hereto for purposes of record and facility of reference,* replied to the above communications. But, at that time, the letter of the Cardinal Secretary of State had already been forwarded to the Archbishop of Malta and the Bishop of Gozo for publication.

8. Ministers were all the more surprised and pained inasmuch as that pronouncement was made, and published, without any indication as to whether the Apostolic Delegate had or not submitted a formal written report to the Holy See. All that Cardinal Gasparri's letter contains on the subject is that " the Holy See

* Enclosure 2

has learnt from the reports of Mgr. the Apostolic Delegate all the gravity of the situation," but it does not make it clear that what follows is also the opinion of the Apostolic Delegate or the impression he gathered from the enquiry on the spot. Ministers have grounds for believing that this is not the case, as they will submit further on.

9. It would appear, on the contrary, that the letter of the Cardinal Secretary of State is based on an extraneous document which runs in the following terms:—

[See Enclosure 1 in No. 9.]

10. On the basis of this document Cardinal Gasparri also addressed a note to Mr. Chilton, the British Minister at the Vatican, as follows:—

[See No. 9.]

11. A comparison between these documents and the letter to the bishops clearly shows that the latter, and the note to Mr. Chilton, repeat substantially the contents of the aide-mémoire.

12. There is no indication as to the source of this aide-mémoire; at the same time Ministers have positive information that the Vatican is flooded with communications from Malta, many of them anonymous, and that at the time of the visit of Lord Strickland and Sir Augustus Bartolo to Rome last November, a political member of the Malta Cathedral Chapter, notorious as a mischief maker, addressed a letter to the Vatican asking that the Premier of Malta and the Minister for Education should not be received, and making against those two Ministers charges substantially identical to those contained in the letter to the bishops and in the note to Mr. Chilton. That canon forwarded his communication with the support of the Italian consular authorities through the "Agenzia Mazzone," which caused it to be posted in Sicily.

13. Ministers regret even more that Cardinal Gasparri did not vouchsafe the indispensable information as to the person or persons by whom "notes were taken on the spot," and as to who were the "reliable eye-witnesses"; these persons "do not hesitate to declare" a string of malicious and infamous misstatements, which Ministers could have afforded to disregard as beneath contempt, had they not received a hearing from the responsible adviser to the Holy See.

14. Although it is the common lot of Ministers and Governments all the world over to be depicted in the blackest colours by their political opponents, whose only aim is to discredit them with the electorate, nevertheless, in countries under constitutional régime, like Malta, Ministers are safe in the knowledge that they represent the majority of the people, and are in duty bound to secure the greatest good of the greatest number, which is the very essence of self-government.

15. The grave imputations made against Ministers in the aide-mémoire—accepted as true by Cardinal Gasparri—reflect equally on the King's representative in Malta and on the Imperial Government as the ultimate custodians of law and order, of the Constitution and of the rights and liberties of the people, to say nothing of the Maltese themselves, who would never tolerate a state of affairs remotely approaching the one painted by the anonymous and irresponsible authors of the aide-mémoire.

16. It is hardly possible to conceive how the Cardinal Secretary of State could have been induced to lend the authority of the Holy See to substantiate grave charges, mostly of a political character, and to treat His Majesty's Ministers of a self-governing unit of the British Empire in a manner which the laws of civilised nations would not allow in regard to an ordinary criminal, *i.e.*, to condemn him without a hearing, and on alleged evidence which he is given no opportunity to rebut.

17. Ministers derive no mean consolation from the knowledge that they are not the only victims of misrepresentation and traducement before the Vatican. Nothing that may have been said against them could possibly exceed the enormity of false accusations advanced, anonymously and otherwise, against Archbishops of Malta, including the present holder of that office. Nor are such-like charges confined to communications, signed or unsigned, to the Holy See, but have been whispered and spread throughout these islands to such an extent that the wife of a distinguished former Governor of Malta once stated that nothing had shocked her and disgusted her more than the way in which certain Monsignori, Canons of the Cathedral of Malta, spoke of their archbishop.

18. Be the source of the aide-mémoire what it may, the contents of the document itself are obviously a travesty of the situation in Malta, dictated by undiluted political bias and transparent personal enmity against Lord Strickland, chronically indulged in by the Opposition, or the so-called "Nationalist" party in Malta.

19. The aide-mémoire is, indeed, a résumé of the average article one reads daily in the Nationalist paper "Malta"—years ago excommunicated by the late Archbishop Pace on orders from Pope Leo XIII for preaching sedition in the name of religion—or in the Italian press, to which such articles are usually sent from Malta mostly through the Agenzia of Signor Mazzone, till lately Italian vice-consul in Malta, and at present undergoing trial at the Criminal Court for abuse of the Consular Office and the evasion of the Postal Laws.

20. It is greatly deplored that the Holy See has been unconsciously misled into lending the assistance of its great prestige and power to what is nothing less than a conspiracy against British rule in Malta.

21. In giving facile credence to the misrepresentations of the self-styled "Nationalists" and taking up the cause of the political "Opposition" in Malta his Eminence cannot have been aware of the character of that party and the nature of that Opposition. It is enough to mention that the *de facto* leader of the Nationalist Opposition is Dr. Enrico Mizzi, the present editor of the above-mentioned "Malta" newspaper, who has been notorious in the past for his anti-British propaganda in Italy and in Malta, and for being condemned during the last war by General Court-Martial for disloyalty and sedition. He is associated with a so-called project for the barter of Malta with Eritrea, and up to this day the basis, aim and object of his policy, as stated by him, are "that the only solution of the Maltese question is the annexation of Malta to Italy" and that "the day cannot be far off when Malta, which *de jure* belongs to Italy, shall belong to her also *de facto*."

22. Towards this end have been directed all the political activities of this so-called "Nationalist" leader and the bulk of his party, both here and in Italy. All possible means towards that end have been tried, conspicuous amongst which was the foundation in Malta, years ago, of the Dante Alighieri Society, whose activities were unanimously denounced by the Italian colony in Malta as contrary to, and subversive of, the sovereign rights of England over the island, and condemned by the late Archbishop Pace as inimical to the Church.

23. Dr. Mizzi has further acquired unenviable notoriety as a former correspondent of the "Battaglie d'Oggi," a newspaper of Naples denounced by his Eminence Cardinal Prisco as the filthiest debaser of morality and the most outrageous slanderer of the Church. This is the type of politicians who are to-day abusing and misusing the sanctity of religion and the influence and power of Holy Mother Church for their party purposes and selfish ends, and for the attainment of their object, viz., to denationalise the Maltese, destroy their native Maltese tongue, uproot their racial characteristics and ultimately replace the British by the Italian flag on the groundless pretext that racially, historically, linguistically and geographically Malta is part and parcel of the Italian Kingdom.

24. It is to bolster up this absurd claim that the opponents of the Government have made it a rule to associate Catholicism with Italianity and to denounce everything that is British as inconsistent with and hostile to our faith.

25. As regards the "note" from Cardinal Gasparri to Mr. Chilton, the first part deals with the religious questions and will be considered forthwith in connexion with the Cardinal's letter to the bishops. As regards the second part, it is much regretted that the responsible Secretary of State at the Vatican should have taken it upon himself to repeat, and to transmit to the Imperial Government, on no proof whatever, charges which, if supported, would be of the greatest gravity, even if they had been preferred against an ordinary subject of His Majesty.

26. It is a much more serious departure from propriety when such charges are alleged against the Premier of a self-governing unit of the British Empire and against one who has spent his life in devoted service to the British Crown and has held four governorships as the representative of the King.

27. Ministers cannot refrain from remarking that, if the first part of the Cardinal's note to Mr. Chilton has the same foundations as the second part, they may well consider themselves exempt from the necessity of any further comments.

28. Ministers are anxious, nevertheless, to leave no doubt whatever as to their real sentiments and conduct as dutiful sons of the Catholic Church. In order to achieve this object in its entirety, it would be necessary to go over the whole ground already covered by the Apostolic Delegate in his enquiry at Malta, and Ministers therefore beg leave to refer to the statements made to him, to the documents given to Mgr. Robinson to be read and copied for record by his secretary, as well as to the "Notes for a Concordat" or protocol which were drafted with the approval of Mgr. Robinson.*

29. It has indeed been a source of perplexity to Ministers to find themselves confronted, after the termination of the Apostolic Delegate's mission, with imputations almost identical with those which appeared so outrageous that they themselves had asked for the appointment of such a Delegate to prove the absurdity thereof to the Holy See.

30. In fact, the very first submission Ministers collectively and individually made to Mgr. Robinson at their first official interview with the Apostolic Delegate was, that the enquiry should be held in public and that all witnesses should be examined on oath—for which purpose they had already prepared and submitted to Parliament the necessary legislation giving the Apostolic Delegate all the powers of a Court of Law and of a Royal Commission—so that accuser and accused should in every case confront one another in open court.

31. On Mgr. Robinson's remarking on the inexpediency of such a procedure—the good motives and spirit of which he fully appreciated—Ministers requested that they should be at least informed of any generic imputations or specific charges made against them, and of the person or persons making such imputations or charges, and they asked that they should be given an opportunity to rebut them. Mgr. Robinson's answer was that that was not at all necessary, and that no one believed anything but that they were true and good Catholics. Ministers were naturally fully satisfied with this assurance and did not insist on that point.

32. As the enquiry was not public, the Ministers had nothing to hide, all the subsequent interviews at the office of the head of the Ministry were held with all the Ministers present together, except on occasions of discussion of formalities. Ministers availed

* Not printed.

themselves of ample opportunities to prove to the satisfaction of Mgr. Robinson how those who depicted them as hostile to the Church, its rights and its traditions were obviously in bad faith and animated solely by political motives.

33. The foregoing is the main reason which inclines Ministers to believe that the opinions expressed by the Cardinal Secretary of State in the letter and other documents above mentioned were not the result of the formal report of the Apostolic Delegate, and much less of the submissions made to him by Ministers and of the documentary proofs placed at his disposal.

34. There are, however, other cogent facts and reasons in support of this belief. The interviews with the Apostolic Delegate were of a most cordial character, as also were the relations both personal and official between Ministers and Mgr. Robinson throughout his visit. His Grace, whilst disclosing no more than the delicate and important nature of his mission warranted, left no doubt on the minds of Ministers that he had rightly understood their point of view, and the spirit of their policy as to the relations between Church and State. Moreover, Ministers took care that his Excellency the Governor should have ample and repeated opportunities of assuring himself personally from Mgr. Robinson that the reports of Ministers to the King's representative were accurate.

35. Mgr. Robinson informally expressed the opinion that most of the submissions made by Ministers would be concurred in by the Vatican, and that the relative requests would be duly granted. In so doing Mgr. Robinson went no further than Cardinal Gasparri and Mgr. Borgongini Duca, the Under-Secretary of State at the Vatican and since created Archbishop and appointed Nuncio to Italy, had done when interviewed in Rome by Lord Strickland and Sir Augustus Bartolo.

36. It will be the recollection of His Eminence and of His Grace that they separately, at the interviews granted to Lord Strickland and Sir Augustus Bartolo at the Vatican, expressly declared that they saw no reason why a special Concordat should not be entered into between the Imperial Government and the Holy See with regard to the affairs of Malta and particularly with regard to the request of Ministers that no foreigners should be appointed heads of Religious Orders in Malta.

37. On these points, and on others raised by the said two Ministers, Cardinal Gasparri was quite explicit in asserting that they would be conceded provided that the request was made by or through the British Foreign Office.

38. It was in the light of these facts that Ministers concluded that Mgr. Robinson's informal expressions of opinion on certain important matters were the result of previous conferences with the Cardinal Secretary of State, and they were confirmed in this belief when Mgr. Robinson was good enough to confer with Ministers

on the draft "Notes for a Concordat," and point out what should be included as likely to be accepted and what had best be omitted as open to objection.

39. It was, as previously stated, with the concurrence of Mgr. Robinson that the final revised draft was exchanged and transmitted, and it was Mgr. Robinson himself who suggested the advisability of sending one of the Maltese Ministers (viz.: Sir Augustus Bartolo) to Rome to help in finally settling the terms of the protocol when the time came for negotiation with Mr. Chilton in Rome.

40. Whatever may be the ultimate decision as to the proposed protocol, the foregoing facts, at all events, prove clearly that there is nothing in the suggestions in reference thereto submitted by Ministers which lays them open to the imputations contained in the recent letter of Cardinal Gasparri to the Bishops.

41. Considering that those suggestions were intended to restore the normal relations between Church and State, and to obviate a recurrence of friction between the two authorities, and that it was in the spirit of those suggestions that the whole policy and conduct of the Government have so far been shaped, Ministers are at a loss to understand the reasons which may have prompted the recent action taken by the Cardinal Secretary of State in their regard.

42. Such action becomes all the more incomprehensible when it is considered that the requests submitted to the Holy See through the Apostolic Delegate not only contain nothing which is "not in accordance with the Catholic Church and Ecclesiastical Authority of the Island" (as stated in the "note" to Mr. Chilton of the 2nd July) but conform with the policy which the Church has heretofore adopted with regard to most countries, including Malta itself, and which the new Vatican State has embodied in the Lateran Treaty and in the relative concordat with the Italian Government.

43. It will be seen by reference to the "notes" that the first and most important of the submissions made by Ministers was for the due observance of the laws in force with regard to certain matters that had been on previous occasions settled as between the Vatican and His Majesty's Government.

44. It was in fact the attempted enforcement of those laws which first brought into conflict the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of Malta. But it is the duty of the Government, as enjoined even by Holy Church, to observe and enforce the observance of existing laws. If there is anything in those laws incompatible with the rights of Church, it is certainly not the fault of the present Ministers, as those enactments have been in existence for generations, and were passed in some cases with the previous consent, and in others with the tacit approval of the Holy See. In these circumstances Ministers fail to see how their conforming with such

laws could be considered as "hurtful to religion and to the most sacred Catholic traditions of Malta."

45. Ministers, therefore, conclude that the basis of the imputations under notice lies in the following paragraph taken from the cardinal's letter to the two bishops, viz :—

> "The offences are specially directed against the clergy whose prestige it is sought to diminish, thus destroying the salutary influence which they have always exercised over this faithful population, and finally they have dared to attack them in the public press and in Parliament and have not spared even the bishops."

46. It is with deep regret that Ministers note that official sanction has been given to this unsupported statement, repeatedly made against them by their political opponents for political reasons.

47. Ministers have never initiated any attack, or done anything in any way derogatory to the dignity and prestige of the clergy as such, nor have they retorted against individual priests, except those who have taken, and are taking, an active part in politics, and are misusing their sacred calling for partisan and personal purposes.

48. Numerous instances of such abuses were referred to the Apostolic Delegate and duly substantiated with documentary evidence and supported by witnesses. It was towards putting an end to this main source of the disputes and friction still prevailing between the Church and the Government of Malta that the chief efforts of Ministers were directed; and with that object they represented that instructions should be given by the Holy See that the clergy in Malta should henceforth keep absolutely aloof from party politics.

49. In submitting this demand, Ministers were but conforming with the well-known policy of the Church in such matters, and Ministers therefore considered it quite natural when Mgr. Robinson unofficially informed them (as Cardinal Gasparri and Mgr. Borgongini Duca had even more explicitly told Lord Strickland and Sir Augustus Bartolo in Rome) that that was one of the questions which the Holy See would most favourably consider.

50. As regards the alleged "offences to the bishops," Ministers desire again to refer to their submissions to the Apostolic Delegate on this subject. They beg leave also to briefly repeat, that they did no more than defend themselves with all due respect against grave accusations publicly made by the archbishop or by "Nationalist" leaders in Parliament against them, and which the archbishop himself is believed to have since found to have been without foundation.

51. The documents presented to Mgr. Robinson and the official reports of the debates in Parliament on this subject have never been disproved or even challenged.

52. Far from wishing to diminish the prestige of the clergy, Ministers desire most earnestly to enhance it, as the greatest safeguard of law, morality and public order, by having it dissociated entirely from the embittered controversies and virulent strife of local politics which unfortunately often develop into personal abuse and are not unfrequently connected with considerations of personal advancement.

53. Even more earnestly do Ministers desire to strengthen the authority of the bishops, and various suggestions tending towards this end are contained in the "notes" for a concordat or protocol. Among the amendments to the Press Laws, now pending before the Senate, Ministers have embodied a new clause making any insult to the bishop a punishable offence actionable *ex officio* by the police.

54. But Ministers submit, most respectfully, but also most emphatically, that the authority and prestige of bishops and clergy cannot be so widely extended as to render them immune from just criticism, and much less from retort in self-defence. Were it otherwise many historical works, written by Catholics, dealing with Popes, Bishops and Priests, would long ago have found a place in the "Index." On this point Ministers beg leave to quote the following extracts from the "The Life of Cardinal Manning," by Edmund Sheridan Purcell—London—Macmillan and Co., 1896—Vol. II., pp. 754–55 written under the direction of Cardinal Manning himself in his lifetime and completed from his writings after his death.

55. Dealing with the fact that Cardinal Manning was all his life opposed to Cardinal Newman the author states :—

> "In such a biography as Manning's the best, the only rule or principle is the simple truth. It is too late now surely to be inconsistent to this principle. And why? Because, it is urged, there are many living men by whom Cardinal Manning is deeply revered and beloved, who would be pained if the illusion of a life-long friendship between him and Newman were blotted out, and it became known that instead of friendship there was a life-long opposition. But has there not been opposition fierce and bitter, between canonised Saints?" .....
>
> .....
>
> "Cardinal Manning himself—and that is enough—has laid down a rule against concealing the sins or shortcomings of bishops and others in the following words, spoken on the occasion of his final visit to Rome in 1883, to Pope Leo XIII :—
>
> > "'Se l'Evangelista non ha celato il peccato e la caduta del Giuda, perchè dobbiamo noi celare il peccato di vescovi ed altri personaggi?'"

56. In a footnote to the above the author adds the following explanation, viz :—

> "Pope Leo XIII gave his cordial assent to Cardinal Manning's proposition that 'If the Evangelist did not conceal

the sin and fall of Judas, neither ought we to conceal the sins of bishops and of other personages.'

"The Pope, in his conversation with Cardinal Manning, reprobated the vicious system of suppressing or glossing over facts in history, sacred or profane, or in the lives of men, Saints or sinners, as repugnant to truth and justice, and in the long run, as detrimental to the spiritual interests of the Church."

57. Ministers were astonished to read in the letter to the bishops the statement that the Holy See had, last winter, deliberately denied an audience to Lord Strickland and Professor Bartolo to signify their disapproval of their conduct and policy.* On this point these two Ministers are submitting a separate memorandum as an appendix to the present one. The undersigned, however, cannot help pointing out the contrast between this alleged attitude of the Holy See at a time when no precise information was available as to the real state of affairs, and its subsequent adherence to the requests of the very same Ministers to appoint an Apostolic Delegate to enquire into those very same matters which the Cardinal Secretary of State now alleges to have prevailed upon His Holiness to prejudge the question and express disapproval in such a marked manner.

58. Ministers have not failed to take particular note of that part of Cardinal Gasparri's letter to the bishops in which he speaks of "the attitude of certain authorities in the Maltese Ministry" which appears to indicate that—like others before him, but certainly not with the same evil suggestion—his Eminence endeavours to convey, or is labouring under the erroneus impression, that there are divergencies of views on policy among Ministers with regard to the questions under notice.

59. In order to dispel such possible misconceptions all the Ministers have joined in drawing up and signing this memorandum, in the conscious and honest conviction that, in spirit as well as in deed, their policy has throughout been, and will continue to be, in accordance with the teachings of the Divine Master: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

60. Ministers cannot feel that they have deserved the treatment meted out to them in Cardinal Gasparri's letter, but even if they had they would find it impossible to believe that they and they alone should be held responsible for the deplorable situation which has developed between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in the island. They find it equally impossible to believe that the Holy See has approved the conduct of the "Opposition" against Ministers and the Ministerial party—the incessant campaign of calumny, the concoction and use of a perjured affidavit, the distri-

* Enclosure 3.

bution thereof by priests and laymen inside or within the precincts of the churches on the morning of election Sunday, the scurrilous, obscene and even sacrilegious publications in their press, the consistent abuse of religion and the Church for political purposes, and the exploitation by not a few priests of their sacred ministry in support of the Opposition and against the Government.

61. Ministers are all the more grieved at the action taken by the Cardinal Secretary of State in their regard inasmuch as it stands out in bold contrast with the attitude of the Holy See on previous occasions. No public censure was directed against the Minister for Education under the first Nationalist Administration (Mgr. Ferris) for continually flouting the authority and belittling the dignity of the archbishop. All but complete silence was maintained about the very severe condemnation and the threat of even graver action by the Holy See against Ministers, as a body, in the second Nationalist Administration and particularly against the Minister for Education (the Rev. E. Dandria) when he defied the authority of the bishop in purely spiritual matters, and, for the first time under British rule, interfered in the internal administration of the Church and, by a civil action and the threat of a criminal prosecution against a Religious community, attempted to prevent the enlargement of St. Francis's Church which had been expressly declared by the archbishop to be indispensable for public worship. This rev. gentleman has since been appointed Canon Theologian.

62. What has, in an especial manner, hurt the feelings of Ministers, is the statement that they "whilst declaring themselves publicly Catholics and devoted to the Holy See are really pursuing an action, &c." The imputation that their religious sentiments and practice, and their devoted attachment to Mother Church and to its representative on earth are mere outward and hypocritical professions, is one which they strongly resent and repudiate.

63. Were they to say more on this subject, they might risk the incurring of the sin of the Pharisees, but even that risk cannot restrain them from publicly and most solemnly declaring, that both in their official and their private capacity, they would welcome comparison with any, or all their traducers, high and low, ecclesiastical or lay.

64. Finally, Ministers submit that the latest proof of their loyalty to the Church has been afforded in the severe test to which it has been subjected by showing forbearance and restraint when denounced by the bishops and the clergy in all the Churches of both Islands by the publication and amplification of the letter of Cardinal Gasparri, which is not only hurtful to their feelings as Catholics and as citizens, but is also a condemnation of the lawfully chosen representatives of the people and of the constituted authorities in this Island, whose smallness of area in no way diminishes its importance and prestige as an autonomous unit of the King's

Dominions any more than it detracts from its splendour as one of the brightest jewels of the Catholic Church.

STRICKLAND,
Head of the Ministry.

A. BARTOLO,
Minister for Education.

A. SAMUT,
Minister for the Treasury.

R. V. GALEA,
Minister for Public Health.

EDWIN VASSALLO,
Minister for Public Works.

WALTER SALOMONE,
Minister for Industry and Commerce.

E. PARNIS,
Minister for Justice.

Malta, July 19, 1929.

Enclosure 1 in No. 11.

Pastoral by His Grace the Archbishop of Malta and His Lordship the Bishop of Gozo publishing His Eminence Cardinal Gasparri's Letter.

Dom Maurus Caruana, O.S.B.,
Archbishop Bishop of Malta,
and
Mons. Michael Gonzi,
Bishop of Gozo.

Venerable Brethren and Dearest Children in Jesus Christ,

We are happy to be able to inform you that the Holy Father, after the report given to him by his Grace Mons. Paschal Robinson, O.F.M., Titular Archbishop of Tyana and Apostolic Delegate to these two dioceses, regarding the politico-religious situation in the same, has deigned to comfort us with his paternal word, by means of a letter addressed to us by his Eminence the Cardinal Secretary of State* which we, the undersigned, duly authorised, publish for the information of those whom Divine Providence has deigned to entrust to our pastoral care.

We, together with the Holy Father, exhort you to raise up with us fervent prayers to God and to the Holy Protectors of our

* See Enclosure 2 in No. 9, page 10.

dioceses, in order that by dint thereof the high word of our common Father may succeed in re-establishing among us the peace and concord so necessary for the prosperity of our country.

Enclosure 2 in No. 11.

Statement by Lord Strickland in reply to Cardinal Gasparri's Note of July 2 to Mr. Chilton, His Majesty's Minister accredited to the Vatican, to the Aide-Mémoire transmitted therewith and to his Eminence's Letter to the Bishops of Malta and Gozo of June 30.

Rome, July 6, 1929.

The undersigned, Lord Strickland, head of the Ministry in Malta, desires to express his grateful thanks for the opportunity to state his views on attacks made on Maltese Ministers in an anonymous aide-mémoire received by his Eminence the Cardinal Secretary of State, and on impressions derived therefrom.

Lord Strickland begs leave to express his satisfaction inasmuch as former imputations are dropped in regard to freemasonry and faith and morals, and the incurring of excommunication.

The reasons for which Maltese Ministers are now *personæ non gratæ* are considered politically. They are traceable to the difficulties which practical Catholics experience in performing their duties to the King and the electors of Malta.

Ministers have to defend themselves from political aggression by ecclesiastics in Malta and Gozo in connection with ministerial duties.

Ministers have never taken the initiative, and they have no wish to do so. They have every hope and desire that since His Holiness has enjoined "the necessary prudence" on the bishops, the amelioration of the situation desired by the Holy See will be immediately obtained.

The aide-mémoire repeats calumnies appearing frequently in the anti-British press of Malta; it alleges public disorder and conveys a specific accusation, viz., that the head of the Ministry is setting class against class.

The truth is that, apart from transitory incidents inseparable from free Parliamentary government everywhere, Malta is at present so prosperous and quiet that both the Governor and the head of the Ministry have at the same time been both absent on leave.

The people have gratefully and joyfully realised that no Ministry can hold office without the constitutional support in the House of Assembly of the majority of the representatives of the electors.

Lord Strickland's Ministry evidently enjoys this popular support, unshaken by systematic calumny or puerile attempts to create the semblance of disturbance.

Ministers are not setting the masses against the classes; Ministers in truth are conceding to some 40,000 electors added under the new Constitution some of the demands justly urged by their representatives in Parliament, which could not be achieved under the former constitution.

Heretofore about 6,000 electors centralised a monopoly of politics in favour of Italian-speaking electors hostile to establishing the position of the Maltese language and to British culture: only about 10 per cent. of the Maltese speak Italian.

The people, or the masses in contrast with the classes, are now getting—

(1) more education in Maltese and English on strictly Catholic lines;
(2) the right to be tried in courts of law in Maltese, viz., in their own mother tongue, a Phœnician language and the only language 80 per cent. can speak;
(3) the right to record notarial deeds in Maltese;
(4) compensation for workmen injured in their avocations;
(5) a press law that protects the weak and workers who aspire to political life;
(6) facilities to emigrate and earn bread abroad in countries where the present Government is prepared to pay for religious ministrations;
(7) equal justice for the weak and poor without favour to judges or nobles or to priests or politicians;
(8) moderate and temporary restrictions against the harsh raising of rents;
(9) establishment of the right of the more numerous House (the Assembly) to finally decide as to expenditure of public money;
(10) legislation to ensure fair parliamentary elections.

The classes, say 6,000 electors whose former monopoly of power is now transferred to the representatives of some 40,000 electors drawn from the masses, are now unable (except by unfair means) to fight for the predominance of the interests and culture of the minority who speak Italian as a second language.

The present Socialistic Government in England cannot be expected to differ from its Conservative predecessor in cordially approving the democratic and popular policy of Lord Strickland's Ministry, based on the principle that revolution and disorder can best be guarded against by providing in time and sufficiently for the just wishes and needs of the majority.

Some negligible disaffection is limited to the formerly dominant

classes; it has ceased to frighten, or even to impress, English Governors and Ministers who are now well informed as to the unjust and artificial character of pro-Italian agitation.

England is represented in Malta by a capable Governor and important questions are dealt with by the Governor-in-Council. If the aide-mémoire contained anything substantial, it would have been the duty of the Governor (not of an Ambassador) to bring the same to the notice of the authorities in London.

The following is a recent example of systematic attempts to make use of ecclesiastical authority to give importance to calumnies: the bishop went to the Governor to report that Lord Strickland was opening letters in the post; this is criminal without a warrant signed by the Governor. The allegation was based on the bishop having received a letter a day late, on Father Carta not having received the usual prompt reply to a letter sent to Rome and on a letter addressed to a Monsignore being missed.

Every employee of the Post Office swore that no letter had been opened by order of the present Administration in passing through the Post Office. It also was proved on oath in court that Father Carta had been posting letters in violation of the law and defrauding the revenue by using Italian stamps with the help of Italian authorities who were more able afterwards to deal with these letters than Lord Strickland.

Ministers held several conferences with the Apostolic Delegate replying unreservedly to all questions and with a friendliness which made them confident that they had furnished conclusive replies to imputations similar to those in the aide-mémoire.

Mgr. Robinson expressed the view that Archbishop Caruana was suffering from chronic illness, "a very, very sick man," and moreover that the archbishop was very badly surrounded and incorrectly informed.

The Apostolic Delegate also realised that the Bishop of Gozo is inordinately ambitious and aggressive, *e.g.*, he had publicly condemned the Governor for allowing a religious conference for non-Catholics in the Palace of Malta whereas the Archbishop of Malta had not considered it necessary to denounce the same conference.

The present Ministers are eminently pro-Maltese (in contrast with the pro-Italians).

There is no anti-clerical campaign on the part of Ministers, the Church and clergy as a whole have never been attacked by Ministers. In self-defence Ministers have exposed wrong-doing and criticised individual ecclesiastics.

Educated Catholics who take an Oath of Office and loyalty to the King, and who are responsible to their electors, cannot conscientiously surrender political authority in civil matters to any bishop under threats of hostility at elections and mixing-up of religion with politics.

There cannot be two Governments in Malta.

If Maltese Catholics are unduly hampered in administering under responsible Government, persons who are not responsible to

the people or persons who do not practise any religion, will ultimately control the Government and ignore the Church.

Under present Ministers, whose candid friendship is not *res grata*, the Church will continue to enjoy great power for good and unlimited sympathy where public duty does not clash.

STRICKLAND,
Head of the Ministry in Malta.

Enclosure 3 in No. 11.

Memorandum of Lord Strickland and Sir Augustus Bartolo on that Part of Cardinal Gasparri's Letter which refers to their Visit to Rome in November 1928.

The undersigned deplore that, in order to support the otherwise unsubstantiated allegations contained in the above letter, the Cardinal Secretary of State has committed himself to statements which, besides being uncalled for, are not in accordance with facts. His Eminence in the aforesaid letter states as follows:—

"As far back as last winter His Holiness openly showed his disapproval of this mode of action, refusing, in spite of pressure from high quarters (*nonostante alte insistenze*), to receive in audience two personages of the Ministry above-mentioned, who were passing through Rome."

His Eminence must have forgotten that, in conversation with the undersigned, he made repeated and emphatic assurances to the contrary, and indeed considered it so important that no misconception should exist on the subject that he reiterated the same assurances in a letter to Lord Strickland in the following terms:—

Segreteria di Stato di Sua Santità.

Lord Strickland, *Vaticano*, 12 *Novembre*, 1928.

In seguito alla nostra conversazione di ieri sera, mi affretto a comunicare a vostra Eccellenza che deve essere bene inteso che il Santo Padre non ha rifiutato la desiderata udienza, ma per ragioni gravissime ha semplicemente ritenuto che essa sia da differire a momento più opportuno anche perchè possa aver luogo nelle forme dovute all'alta carica coperta da vostra Eccellenza. Ed è in questo senso che noi ci daremo premura di informare il Governo inglese.

Distinti ossequii,
Pietro Cardinal Gasparri.

(Translation.)

Secretariat of State of His Holiness.

Lord Strickland, *The Vatican, November* 12, 1928.

Following our conversation of last evening, I hasten to communicate to your Excellency that it must be well understood

that the Holy Father has not refused the desired audience, but for very grave reasons has simply considered that it should be put off to a more opportune moment also in order that it may take place in the forms due to the high office held by your Excellency. And it is in this sense that we will make it our early duty to inform the English Government.

Best respects,

PIETRO CARDINAL GASPARRI.

2. Neither is it correct to state that "the two personages of the Maltese Ministry were passing through Rome." The undersigned had purposely gone to Rome by arrangement of the British Foreign Office with the special object of conferring with the Vatican authorities on the differences existing between the Government and the Church in Malta. On completion of their object they both returned to London and did not proceed straight to Malta. The special object of the visit, and the part played therein by the Foreign Office is clearly apparent from the last paragraph of the Cardinal's letter above reproduced.

3. His Eminence is aware, from a Foreign Office letter a copy of which was presented to Mgr. Borgongini Duca, that the undersigned requested an audience of the Holy Father as the result of a suggestion from official quarters that it would not be proper for two Ministers of the Malta Government to visit Rome without paying their respects to His Holiness, quite apart from the religious character of the questions in respect of which they visited the Eternal City. The cardinal's reply to that representation was that it was inopportune for His Holiness to receive the two Ministers in special audience at a time when grave questions were pending between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in Malta as His Holiness's action in granting such an audience would, or might be, misconstrued into a prejudgment of the issues and a partial treatment in favour of one side. His Eminence added further considerations which were afterwards embodied in the letter above reproduced. This is very far from a refusal of an audience as a sign of displeasure.

4. The tenor of that part of the cardinal's letter under consideration is likely to produce the impression that not only did the Holy Father refuse an audience to the undersigned as a mark of disfavour, but that the Vatican authorities declined to have any dealings with them. Such impression does not conform with facts, and the undersigned still treasure happy and grateful recollection of the charm and courtesy with which they were received and treated by his Eminence and other high officials at the Vatican. Their reception had been arranged beforehand through the Foreign Office and the British Legation, and the day after their arrival in Rome they were very cordially received by the Cardinal Secretary of State at the Vatican. They were accompanied by Mr. Randall, the secretary of the British Legation to the Holy See, who was acting as Chargé d'Affaires pending the arrival of Mr. Chilton. At the interview most of the issues since submitted to the Apostolic

between the Church and the Government was the first and most important submission made to Cardinal Gasparri and also the one which his Eminence considered as very likely to be acceded to. The same courteous and frank attitude was observed by his Eminence with regard to the other points raised, and the only condition which Cardinal Gasparri seemed very much concerned in insisting upon was that all representations should be made officially to the Holy See through the British Foreign Office.

5. The first interview lasted well over an hour, after which his Eminence expressed his reluctance in having to bring it to a conclusion on the ground that Ministers of Foreign States accredited to the Vatican had been waiting for a considerable time to see him on important matters. When the undersigned submitted that they had further questions to discuss with him his Eminence replied that that was only a first interview and not the last, and he expressed his readiness to meet the Ministers again at their convenience either at the Vatican or at their hotel. His Eminence having further intimated his intention of honouring the Ministers with a return visit at the hotel, it was agreed that the occasion should be availed of for further discussion.

6. After leaving the office of the cardinal, the undersigned, still accompanied by Mr. Randall, proceeded to visit Mgr. Borgongini Duca, then Under-Secretary of State, at his office, and another protracted interview was held with him covering most of the ground previously traversed with his Eminence. The Under-Secretary of State was equally affable and courteous and was just as frank as the cardinal in the expression of his opinions as to the possible attitude of the Holy See on the questions submitted by Ministers. It was indeed Mgr. Borgongini Duca who first suggested the possibility of a Special Concordat with the British Government in regard to Malta. Later in the day Mgr. Borgongini Duca called on the Ministers at their hotel.

7. It would not be amiss to mention, as illustrating the cordiality between his Eminence and the undersigned, that the same evening Lord Strickland in his own name and on behalf of Professor Bartolo wrote to Cardinal Gasparri suggesting that the return visit of his Eminence be made the occasion of a dinner party. To this letter his Eminence replied as follows :—

Segreteria di Stato di Sua Santità.

Lord Strickland, *Vaticano*, 11 *Novembre*, 1928.

Ho ricevuto il suo gentile invito, del quale La ringrazio di cuore, dispiacente di non poterlo accettare. Questa sera gli esporrò il mio regime da tavola che impedisce l'accettazione di qualsiasi invito al pranzo. Invece gradirò una aranciata o qualche cosa di simile con una pasta senza zucchero.

Distinti ossequi,

Pietro Cardinal Gasparri.

(Translation.)
Secretariat of State to His Holiness.

Lord Strickland, *The Vatican, November* 11, 1928.

I have received your kind invitation for which I thank you from my heart, regretting my being unable to accept it. This evening I will explain to you my table régime which debars the acceptance of any invitation to dinner. I would instead accept with pleasure an orangeade or something similar with a cake without sugar.

Best respects,

PIETRO CARDINAL GASPARRI.

8. His Eminence called at the hotel that evening and the undersigned remained closeted with him for the best part of two hours during which all the questions were thoroughly discussed. His Eminence seemed greatly impressed with the submissions made to him, and appeared to be unaware of various facts and circumstances of great importance touching the ecclesiastical affairs of Malta, and he promised that the necessary action would be taken to put an end to all differences and to redress just grievances. His Eminence was even more cordial and friendly on this second occasion and greatly interested the Ministers with an account of the part he had taken in the codification of the Canon Law and with details of the manner in which that colossal work had been accomplished. Before taking his leave Cardinal Gasparri informed the Ministers that he would be glad to consider any further suggestions in writing through the British Legation. On the following day the undersigned embodied their remarks and suggestions in a number of separate "notes,"* copies of which were informally given to Mr. Randall, the originals being sent to the Foreign Office, pending the settlement of procedure as to channels of communication between the Malta Government and the Holy See. The same afternoon the Ministers left Rome for London.

9. It would not be out of place to add in conclusion that the same courtesies were extended to the undersigned not only by the British Ambassador in Rome and by Mr. Randall, the Acting Chargé d'Affaires at the British Legation, but also by the Italian Government and authorities. They visited Rome under safe conduct from Signor Mussolini and with a *laissez-passer* of the Italian Ambasador in London. They were treated with the utmost consideration by all the authorities, who took special measures for their protection as far as the frontier, and it was with feelings of gratitude that they called at the Palazzo Chigi to convey to Signor Mussolini, through one of his secretaries, an expression of their appreciation and thanks.

STRICKLAND.
A. BARTOLO.

Malta, July 16, 1929.

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* Not printed.

Statement handed to the Cardinal Secretary of State by Mr. Chilton on August 8, 1929.

His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has received from His Majesty's Minister to the Holy See a note, dated the 2nd July,* in which the Cardinal Secretary of State transmits a copy of a letter already addressed to the Archbishop of Malta and the Bishop of Gozo, together with a précis of a memorandum sent to the Holy See by anonymous "eye-witnesses" relative to the conduct of Maltese affairs by the head of the Maltese Ministry. The memorandum declares that Malta is subject to a régime of terror and despotism, that the parliamentary Opposition is disarmed, its press gagged, the courts threatened, the administration of justice suspended, the Constitution endangered and the Church and religion openly insulted and opposed. The letter to the Archbishop of Malta and the Bishop of Gozo exhorts them "to continue with the necessary firmness joined to the necessary prudence in the line of conduct held until now against the attitude of some of the authorities in the Maltese Ministry." The covering note to Mr. Chilton explains that this letter is to be published in order to "inform the Maltese people that Lord Strickland is not *persona grata* to the Holy See as he professes to be, and that the Holy See itself entirely supports the action of the Ordinaries of Malta and of Gozo in their disapproval of the activities of Lord Strickland." The letter ends with an intimation that His Majesty's Government should "adopt such measures as they may consider necessary to prevent such subversive activity (on the part of the Maltese Ministry) or at least divorce their responsibility from that of Lord Strickland."

2. Comment on this communication from the Cardinal Secretary of State may usefully be prefaced by a summary of certain antecedent facts. The relations between Church and State in Malta had admittedly given rise to many difficult and important questions. At the instance of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, the Holy See therefore despatched an Apostolic Delegate in the spring of this year to examine the situation in Malta, to discuss it with the Maltese authorities, and to enquire whether some general agreement could not be reached between them and the Vatican which would avoid local friction and confirm the cordial relations existing between His Majesty's Government and the Holy See. Protracted and satisfactory discussions took place between Mgr. Paschal Robinson and the head of the Maltese Ministry. In due course Mgr. Robinson returned to Rome, and the head of the Maltese Ministry proceeded to London, to report respectively to His Holiness and to His Majesty's Government as being the principals in any subsequent negotiations for the conclusion of a definite agreement regarding the Catholic Church in Malta. Subsequently, the head of the Maltese Ministry visited Rome on his way back to Malta. On Mr. Henderson's instructions† His

* No. 9, page 8. † See No. 8, page 8.

Majesty's Minister requested the Vatican that advantage might be taken of the presence of the head of the Maltese Ministry in Rome to arrange an audience with the Cardinal Secretary of State and Cardinal Ceretti in order that the preliminary discussions with Mgr. Robinson might be carried a step further towards fruition. Before Mr. Chilton could carry out his instructions his Eminence Cardinal Gasparri had handed to His Majesty's Minister the note which forms the subject of the preceding paragraph, and on Mr. Chilton actually making his request for an audience, Cardinal Gasparri referred him to this note, informing him at the same time that the head of the Maltese Ministry was no longer *persona grata* and that instructions had been given that he was to be received by no one whatever at the Vatican. Mr. Chilton hesitated to receive this message from the mouth of the Cardinal Secretary of State and this note from his hands, but his Eminence declined to modify the attitude he had taken up.

3. If in the face of the situation thus created by the Holy See His Majesty's Government now adopt an attitude of moderation, Cardinal Gasparri should understand that such moderation is prompted not by the circumstances of the case but by sincere regard to the high office and sacred function of the Holy See.

4. For what are the circumstances of which His Majesty's Government feel it their duty to complain? The Holy See has seen fit to bring to an abrupt end and without previous warning or explanation negotiations initiated by Mgr. Robinson in Malta, and which His Majesty's Government hoped would result in a definite agreement between the Holy See and His Majesty's Government for the settlement on a satisfactory basis of the relations between Church and State in Malta. This is an act which His Majesty's Government cannot but consider as both discourteous to themselves and unjustified by the circumstances. But apart from the regrettable and unexpected interruption of these negotiations there are three other aspects of the case to which they desire more particularly to call attention.

5. In the first place, the Holy See has declared to be *persona non grata* the head of a responsible Government in a British colony. It appears to His Majesty's Government incompatible with the existence of friendly diplomatic relations between the Holy See and themselves that the former should treat as *persona non grata* a Minister exercising executive functions in British territory in virtue of the Constitution of that territory. His Majesty's Government have learned of the Vatican's attitude towards the head of the Maltese Ministry with pain and surprise. They cannot suffer themselves without expostulation to be exposed, in the person of an executive Minister in one of the British Colonies, to such a slight. Incidentally, Cardinal Gasparri in his letter to the Maltese hierarchy states that last autumn and for the same reason as now given the head of the Maltese Ministry was refused an audience with His

and with the explanations given verbally to His Majesty's Minister to the effect that the desired interview was not denied but merely postponed, and only postponed out of consideration for the head of the Maltese Ministry himself.

6. In the second place, the Holy See has without previous warning or consultation with His Majesty's Government issued public and explicit instructions to the Maltese Episcopate and through them to the Maltese clergy which, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, constitute a direct incitement to discredit and even to resist the freely and constitutionally elected Government of that Colony. Such interference in the domestic politics of a British Colony is repugnant to the elementary principles of public law. His Majesty's Government must protest against this act most strongly, and desire to make it clear that an interference of this nature must meet with their strongest reprobation.

7. Thirdly, the Holy See, in an official note to His Majesty's Minister at the Vatican, has on the strength of an anonymous memorandum accused the Maltese Ministry of civil tyranny and religious persecution, and in virtue of this accusation has requested His Majesty's Government to restrain the activities and to disavow the policy of the Maltese Ministry. As the Holy See is doubtless aware, the Maltese Ministry rests on the support of legislature elected by popular franchise. If their actions have been illegal the ordinary remedies have been open to any persons who regard themselves as aggrieved. If they have been politically unwise or inexpedient the remedy lies with the electorate. In any case His Majesty's Government must refuse to take into consideration allegations which have never been tested either by evidence furnished to His Majesty's Government through the diplomatic channel or by proceedings in the Maltese courts. They deplore not only the fact that the Holy See should have seen fit to formulate a request that is inadmissible, but that it should have done so in circumstances which seem to imply a regrettable readiness on its part to believe His Majesty's Government to have been conniving at tyranny and persecution in British territory. His Majesty's Government might reasonably have expected that the Holy See before issuing its instructions of the 20th June to the Maltese hierarchy, and before requesting His Majesty's Government to condemn the policy of the Maltese Ministry, would have availed itself of the negotiations already initiated by Mgr. Robinson, in order to explore with His Majesty's Government the possibility of a settlement of the difficulties existing between Church and State in Malta. Instead of this the Vatican has preferred to prejudge by its action the very questions which the Apostolic Delegate had at the request of His Majesty's Government been sent to Malta to investigate.

8. His Majesty's Government have felt obliged on this occasion to express themselves in unequivocal language, but they desire also to add an appeal to their remonstrance. The Holy See has recently concluded with the Italian Government an agreement calculated to enhance the world-wide spiritual authority of His Holiness the Pope. This agreement was the subject of heartfelt congratulations from His Majesty's Government. They sincerely desire that nothing should mar the satisfaction at this event felt not only by themselves but by the very numerous subjects of His Majesty who profess spiritual allegiance to the Holy See. For this reason they would earnestly appeal to the Holy See to observe in relation to His Majesty's Government that moderation, consideration and restraint which His Majesty's Government expect—and are entitled to expect —to find in the policy of the Holy See wherever its activities are exercised. If, on the present occasion, His Majesty's Government feel constrained to make it clear that they must needs view any departure from this policy on the part of the Holy See with serious misgivings and grave demur, it is precisely because they value so highly those frank and cordial relations which they have been fortunate enough to establish with the Holy See and which they wish, if possible, to see maintained and fortified.

No. 13.

Pro-memoriâ handed to Mr. Chilton by the Cardinal Secretary of State on August 10, 1929.

(Translation.)

The Holy See has received the Foreign Office memorandum of the 5th instant* regarding the situation in Malta, and has been painfully surprised to see how therein has been given, altogether and exclusively, the thought of Lord Strickland, and that, therefore, statements have been often made or set forth inexactly which do not correspond to the facts. It is therefore necessary, before all, to recall in full how events have developed, so as to show how the Holy See, in the just care for its interests (that is, in the fulfilment of its duty) in the religious sphere, has conducted itself with the most absolute loyalty towards His Majesty's Government.

For some time the Holy See had been aware that the religious situation of Catholicism in Malta, after the return of Lord Strickland, was seriously disturbed; doubtless the same fact had been noted also by His Majesty's Government. Before coming to any decision thereon, the Holy See first sent to Malta the Rev. Father Orlich, Minister-General of the Conventuals, a person enjoying its entire confidence, in order that he might, in an absolutely confidential manner, make observations and furnish a report.

In March last, to meet the desire of the Maltese Ministry, whose interpreter was the British Minister to the Holy See, the latter sent to the island Mgr. Paschal Robinson as Delegate Apostolic. In the choice of the person the Holy See had in mind the idea of doing something agreeable to His Majesty's Government, which,

* No. 12, page 31.

in fact, on the 12th March, through His Majesty's Minister, informed it that it approved "most cordially" of the appointment of Mgr. Robinson. An equally agreeable reception was accorded to the selection not only by the bishops and clergy of Malta—which was only natural—but also by the Maltese Ministry and by Lord Strickland himself. Mgr. Robinson therefore left for Malta, having received no other instructions from the Holy See but to collect on the spot all the information possible, questioning such persons as he considered suitable, and then to make a complete report to the Holy See. It is unnecessary to recall how Mgr. Robinson's work in Malta was carried through with that ability and prudence which distinguish him, so much so that, on leaving the island two months later, he was able to receive the unanimous approval of all and received flattering letters from the Maltese Ministry, in the name of Lord Strickland, and also from the British Government.

On his return to Rome on the 2nd June Mgr. Robinson, in obedience to the task entrusted to him, presented to the Holy See a full and detailed report on the religious situation in Malta. Taking account in a special manner of such an exhaustive report, but at the same time not neglecting what had been reported by the bishops of Malta and by Father Orlich, those documents were compiled which the Holy See subsequently issued. Thus the accusation, brought by Lord Strickland, and published by him in the open press, and now (to the surprise of the Holy See) repeated in the Foreign Office memorandum, falls to the ground—the accusation, that is to say, that the Holy See has taken its stand only on information sent to it by anonymous persons. The Holy See regards it as a sign of scanty respect towards itself to suppose that in a matter of such importance for the good of religion it could determine its action on information which reached it from anonymous or irresponsible sources. On the contrary, it has taken account of nothing but reports furnished by the above-mentioned persons, who are unexceptionable in every way. Had Lord Strickland in any way represented the British Government in the island, the Cardinal Secretary of State would have preferred to refer to Mr. Chilton, British Minister to the Holy See, and treat with him. It was only after Mgr. Robinson had given an assurance that Lord Strickland in no way represented the British Government in Malta, but was simply the head of a Maltese party, at present in power—it was only then that it was decided to follow the advice of Mgr. Robinson and write the well-known letter to the Maltese bishops. Nevertheless, although the document was addressed to religious authorities and concerned religious questions, the Holy See, with special regard for the delicacy of the matter, immediately communicated the text to the British Minister, and added a note for His Majesty's Government, with a brief summary, derived from the reports which had reached the Holy See from the sure sources above mentioned. The same diplomatic note and the memorandum annexed have been published in full by Lord Strickland, on his own account, in newspapers in Malta and in England—a fact which

the Holy See has observed not without surprise. It cannot be denied that this rash publication has assisted in no small degree to make the situation, already serious, more painful. But it is clear that no blame can be laid against the Holy See on this account.

From the explanation given it seems to be clear that the procedure of the Holy See has been at all times correct and prudent, and that it is simple to reply precisely to the charges against the Holy See contained in the Foreign Office memorandum.

Indeed, if the Holy See, in a diplomatic document, addressed to His Majesty's Government, has declared that Lord Strickland is not *persona grata*, this must not be viewed as a slight towards His Majesty's Government, but only as a statement, certainly in accordance with the facts, from the religious point of view, to the effect that the activities of Lord Strickland in Malta, as head of the Ministry, are seriously prejudicial to the interests of Catholicism, and that in consequence such a person cannot be regarded as *grata* to the Holy See.

From this it likewise appears that the Holy See has had no intention of interfering in the domestic politics of a British Colony, and still less of inciting the bishops to an illegal resistance to the constituted authority. On the contrary, it was the undue and ever-increasing interference on the part of Lord Strickland in the purely religious sphere which compelled the Holy See to encourage the bishops in their attitude of firm and justified watchfulness.

It is for the same reasons that Lord Strickland was refused a Papal audience in November 1928; indeed, in the letter of the 4th November, 1928, addressed by the Cardinal Secretary of State to Mr. Randall, British Chargé d'Affaires, it was stated: "The visit of his Excellency the Prime Minister to the Holy Father at this moment, in which Maltese public opinion is excited . . . . might be interpreted in a sense which it cannot and should not have. Therefore, I beg to state that it would be more fitting to postpone the visit of his Excellency Lord Strickland to the Holy Father until the existing difficulties are settled." This explains what sense must be given to the words which the Cardinal Secretary of State wrote on the 12th November to Lord Strickland in a private note: "The Holy Father has not refused the desired audience, *but for most serious reasons has considered that it should be put off to a more suitable time.*" It is not clear, therefore, for what motive Lord Strickland should allow himself to accuse the Holy See of having contradicted itself, giving wide publicity to the personal note sent him by the Cardinal Secretary of State, and saying nothing of the rest. As matters stand, it is obvious that the Holy See could not continue the conversations just begun in regard to a concordat to be concluded for the settlement of the religious situation in Malta, nor could the Holy See resume them so long as it is not persuaded that Lord Strickland intends to respect the rights of the Church and practise a proper regard towards the local ecclesiastical authorities.

Such has been exactly the development of this regrettable affair. It clearly demonstrates that the Holy See has at no time thought of showing a lack of the proper loyalty and courtesy toward His Majesty's Government; it also shows how unfounded are the statements of Lord Strickland in his memorandum, which has been widely published in the newspapers.

The Holy See once more rejects with the utmost vigour the false and malicious insinuation made by Lord Strickland that the Holy See has acted in favour of the Italian party in the island. If this party existed there—a matter which the Holy See is loath to believe—it is certain that the Holy See, in writing the letter to the bishops, has had in view nothing but the religious interests of Catholicism, threatened and already seriously harmed by Lord Strickland's attitude—interests which are very far from being opposed to the rights of the British Crown in the island.

Vatican, August 10, 1929.

No. 14.

Statement handed to the Cardinal Secretary of State by Mr. Randall on October 4, 1929.

His Majesty's Government have read with interest the *pro-memoriâ* which the Holy See was good enough to communicate on the 10th August* to His Majesty's Minister in reply to the recent representations which His Majesty's Government were reluctantly compelled to make in view of the attitude adopted by the Holy See towards His Majesty's Government in connexion with the affairs of Malta.

2. His Majesty's Government regret that in this *pro-memoriâ* the Holy See makes no proposals for solving the present unsatisfactory position, and, while deeply deploring this attitude, His Majesty's Government still hope that, on further consideration, the Vatican may come to share with His Majesty's Government the view that the best, and indeed the only constitutional, way of putting an end to the present strained relations between Church and State in Malta is by initiating negotiations through the diplomatic channel with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, who are responsible for the direction of the foreign affairs of Malta. Meanwhile, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, the decision of the Holy See renders useless the continuance of a discussion on the present basis; but before closing this correspondence His Majesty's Government feel constrained to offer the following observations:—

3. His Majesty's Government take note of the fact that the anonymous accusations set forth in the document enclosed in Cardinal Gasparri's note of the 2nd July were extracted from reports made by Mgr. Robinson, Father Orlich and the bishops of Malta. This fact was not stated in Cardinal Gasparri's note of the 2nd July, which merely described the authors of the document in question as

* No. 13, page 34.

"eye-witnesses of the activities of Lord Strickland in Malta." His Majesty's Government, therefore, were fully entitled to describe the document as anonymous.

4. As regards the accusations thus formulated, His Majesty's Government feel bound to repeat that they must refuse to take into consideration allegations which have never been tested, either by information furnished to His Majesty's Government through the diplomatic channel or by proceedings in the Maltese courts. They regret that in a matter of such gravity the Holy See should have discarded both these methods of procedure in favour of that adopted on the advice tendered to it. In such matters they cannot regard the advisers of the Holy See as competent authority on the Maltese Constitution or on the relationship between His Majesty's Government and the head of the Maltese Ministry, and, to dispel all further doubt, they wish to repeat that they are responsible for the foreign relations of Malta.

5. His Majesty's Government are glad to learn that, in declaring the head of the Maltese Ministry to be *persona non grata*, the Holy See did not intend to put any slight upon His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government must, however, in this matter maintain the point of view set forth in their statement of the 5th August.

6. His Majesty's Government, whose attitude in party politics in Malta is one of complete detachment, learn with relief that the Holy See has had no intention of interfering in the domestic affairs of a British Colony, and still less of inciting the bishops of that Colony to illegal resistance to the constitutional authorities. They are glad to receive this assurance in order to correct the inferences which they otherwise were bound to draw from the singular wording both of Cardinal Gasparri's letter to the Maltese hierarchy and of his Eminence's note to His Majesty's Minister; but they regret that occasion has not been taken to give a wider currency to the correct interpretation of the former document.

7. The *pro-memoriâ* of the Vatican contains more than one statement tending to refute allegations recently made by the head of the Maltese Ministry, either through the medium of the press or in the Maltese Chamber of Representatives. Inasmuch as the representations which His Majesty's Government were compelled to address to the Holy See on the 5th August contained no allusion whatsoever to any statements made by the head of the Maltese Ministry, all references to such statements appear to His Majesty's Government irrelevant and inapplicable to the points at issue. They therefore do not propose to express any opinion with regard to them, except to state that they learn with pleasure, but without surprise, that the Holy See has not acted in favour of any so-called Italian party in Malta. It need hardly be said that no such allegation was made by His Majesty's Government in their representations of the 5th August.

No. 15.

Pro-Memoriâ handed to Mr. Randall by Mgr. Pizzardo on October 14, 1929.

(Translation.)

The Holy See received on the 5th instant the statement of the Foreign Office in reply to the *pro-memoriâ* of the Holy See conveyed to the British Government on the 10th August.

In the statement in question the Foreign Office once more deals with the disturbed religious situation in the Island of Malta, and manifests the hope that the Vatican will agree with His Majesty's Government in initiating negotiations through the diplomatic channel with the object of putting an end to a so painful situation.

The Holy See is glad to reply that, being itself intensely anxious to see religious peace re-established among the excellent Maltese people, which is so desirable also for British interests, it receives this suggestion with great pleasure—all the more because it has full confidence in the present Minister of His Britannic Majesty, Mr. Chilton. The letter of the 30th June was sent directly to the Maltese hierarchy without letting it pass through the diplomatic channel (albeit it was communicated to His Majesty's Minister) because the Holy See, religious interests being in question, as is its right and as is required by all conventions, treats of such interests directly with the bishops and is accustomed to do the same (as His Majesty's Government must be aware) with the bishops of all nations, not excepting those which have diplomatic relations with the Holy See. This fact does not prevent the Holy See from accepting also diplomatic negotiations, as, indeed, it does now accept them, with pleasure, at the desire of His Majesty's Government.

Since it is highly necessary that such negotiations should not be in any way disturbed, but should be conducted with that cordiality and serenity which shall permit of the desired and satisfactory conclusion, it would be necessary that in London, as in Malta or elsewhere, all public discussions on the matter under consideration should be avoided. For its part the Holy See undertakes to maintain the same reserve.

At the outset of the discussions in question it will be as well to remember that the principal, if not the sole, cause of the disturbed religious conditions in Malta has been the anti-clerical attitude of Lord Strickland since he first arrived. Things being as they are, it is difficult to see how peace and religious tranquillity can be re-established so long as the causes of such disturbed conditions persist.

To this the Holy See considers it necessary to add two observations:—

1. The Holy See declares once more and in the most explicit and most vigorous manner that it sent persons to Malta possessing its full confidence for the sole purpose of giving an exact account of the present religious situation in the island, and not for political reasons or objects. It may

also be recalled once more that it was the British Government which itself requested the Holy See to send a Visitor Apostolic to examine the religious situation on the spot. The Holy See, which was glad to meet this request from the Government, wished first to have, and had, the assurance that Mgr. Robinson was not only *persona grata*, but *gratissima*, and possessed of the full confidence, not only of the British Government, but of Lord Strickland himself.

2. The Holy See has read with a certain surprise in the *promemoriâ* of the Foreign Office that His Majesty's Government do not intend to take into consideration accusations formulated against Lord Strickland which "have not been tested either by information furnished through the diplomatic channel or by proceedings in the Maltese courts."

In regard to the diplomatic channel, the Holy See did avail itself of this, since it sent to Mr. Chilton on the 2nd July a note with a memorandum attached, together with a copy of the letter addressed to the bishops of Malta. Thus, the Holy See, although the matter concerned solely the religious situation of the island, communicated to the British Government, from a sense of goodwill and out of delicate regard, not only the text of the document issued by it (and this twelve days before the bishops could make it public), but also the substance of the information it had received, precisely so that the Government could co-operate in the restoration of religious peace in Malta. For the rest, the Holy See will not be averse to communicating to His Majesty's Government through the diplomatic channel such further information as may be useful to the success of the future discussions.

In regard to the Maltese courts, the Holy See does not see in what manner these could have been brought into the affair, since, indeed, it was not for them to examine, still less to decide, matters which concern the religious situation in the island. On this point the Holy See has already shown itself to be particularly sensitive, the matter being one of the free exercise of its powers. In fact, when, in March 1929, Mgr. Robinson arrived in Malta as Delegate Apostolic, Lord Strickland (as His Majesty's Government will be aware) prepared an Act to confer certain powers on the Apostolic Delegate appointed by His Holiness the Pope to enquire into matters in Malta. But, by explicit instructions from the Holy See, the Delegate Apostolic opposed the carrying out of this project, not only because it would have conferred almost the character of a civil process on the delegate's activities, but still more, because it represented the conferring of civil powers by the civil authority on one who, in the exercise of his religious mission, could not receive faculties and instructions otherwise than from the Holy See. All this was openly declared by the Delegate Apostolic to Lord Strickland, on the 4th April, in the presence of the whole Cabinet.

The Holy See expresses its entire confidence that, taking into consideration the indications in this *pro-memoriâ*, it will shortly be possible to arrive at a happy understanding with the Government of His Britannic Majesty, with which it is glad to be in such cordial relations.

Vatican, October 18, 1929.

No. 16.

Statement handed to Cardinal Secretary of State by Mr. Chilton on December 20, 1929.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have received with satisfaction the *pro-memoriâ* which the Holy See was good enough to communicate on the 13th October to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, and take note of the assurance that the Holy See is ready to initiate negotiations with them, through the diplomatic channel, on the subject of the Church in Malta. These negotiations will, it is hoped, establish on a more satisfactory basis the relations between the clergy and the civil administration in Malta, and at the same time put an end to the painful situation which has now existed for some time past owing to the attitude adopted by the Holy See towards His Majesty's Government in connexion with the affairs of that island.

2. On the strength of this assurance by the Holy See, His Majesty's Government forthwith instructed His Majesty's Minister to return to Rome,* and they have now authorised him to discuss verbally with the Cardinal Secretary of State the procedure which had best be adopted with regard to these contemplated negotiations as well as the scope and form which ought to be given to them in order that the most satisfactory results may be obtained.

3. In this connexion His Majesty's Government feel compelled to call the Holy See's attention to the note addressed to Cardinal Gasparri by Mr. Chilton on the 1st March, in which the latter requested the Holy See, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, to send an Apostolic Visitor to Malta in view of the general unsatisfactory state of ecclesiastical affairs in the island. This note stated that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, disregard of the rule against priests indulging in political agitation and the intense participation of the Maltese priests in local politics lay at the root of the present trouble. This view His Majesty's Government still maintain, and they cannot, therefore, admit that the "principal, if not the sole, cause of the disturbed religious conditions in Malta has been the anti-clerical attitude of Lord Strickland," as suggested in the *pro-memoriâ* of the 13th October.

4. Lastly, in taking note of the statement in the *pro-memoriâ* to the effect that the Holy See accepts diplomatic negotiations with

* Mr. Chilton had proceeded on leave on August 11, 1929.

pleasure at "the desire of His Majesty's Government," His Majesty's Government feel constrained to point out that if they do in fact desire such negotiations at the present time, it is for reasons which they trust will appeal with equal force to the Holy See, namely, the need to examine and to dispose of the accusations made by the Holy See against the Maltese administration last summer. In that event the desire to initiate these negotiations must needs be mutual.

No. 17.

Mr. Chilton to Mr. A. Henderson.

British Legation to the Holy See,
Rome, December 27, 1929.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith a report as published in the "Daily Malta Chronicle" of a letter addressed to the parish priests of Malta by the archbishop of that island.

2. In the course of a conversation which I had this morning with the Cardinal Secretary of State I took the opportunity of mentioning the matter to his Eminence, and suggested that the archbishop should be restrained from indulging in such utterances and thereby provoking undesirable polemics.

3. The cardinal, in reply, suggested that as soon as conversations for a concordat had begun it would be a good plan to enforce silence on both parties so that the negotiations should proceed without interruption. I informed his Eminence that I heartily approved of this suggestion.

Enclosure in No. 17.

Extract from the "Daily Malta Chronicle" of December 17, 1929.

ARCHBISHOP'S ADDRESS TO PARISH PRIESTS.

The Dispute with the Government.

[WE publish herewith a translation of the address delivered in Italian, by his Grace the Archbishop on Wednesday last, the 11th instant, to the parish priests and provincials of religious orders, assembled in the Archiepiscopal Palace, Valletta. The address, which is published in "Lehen Is-Sewwa," official organ of the Curia, is of general interest.]

You know that the past action of the bishops was examined by the Apostolic Delegate whom the Holy See had sent here to Malta at the instance of our Government. The Apostolic Delegate examined the entire question and approved the whole of the action

of the bishops, as results from the letter sent to the same bishops by Cardinal Gasparri; a letter actuated by and founded upon not anonymous reports but, in a special way, upon the report of the Apostolic Delegate and upon other reports of two persons expressly charged by the Holy See. Hence we feel the consolation of being able to say that, as regards the past, the action of the bishops has been fully approved by the Holy Father, who did not fail to encourage the bishops to continue in the same way and with the same energy, not without the necessary prudence. As a result of this letter, there was a protest on the part of the Government, a protest made with much fuss, being also sent to the press and presented in open Parliament; a protest intended to refute what Cardinal Gasparri had said, a protest based on secret documents, abusively copied and given to the press. This famous reply of the Government never reached the Vatican because the Imperial Government, judging it indecorous, did not think it proper to transmit it to the Holy Father. The same was the fate of another document presented a few weeks ago by the Government to the British Ministry which document was also judged indecorous. It is well that this should be known. From this it is evident that the action of our Government was disapproved by the Holy Father and that the Imperial Government did not support the so-called defence of the Maltese Ministry.

I now pass to the address of the Holy Father delivered to the pilgrims of Malta and Gozo in August last. Some of you were present and will still recall the impression that this address made upon them. For my part I can say that what struck me while near the Holy Father was the tone of authority with which His Holiness spoke. One forgot all the great pomp which surrounded him; the Swiss Guards and Monsignori who encircled the Papal throne. I saw only the Vicar of Jesus Christ speaking with full authority, *tamquam auctoritatem habens*. And the entire address turned on this one point: Authority. "Those who wish to be with Christ must stand with His Vicar, because it is the Vicar of Jesus Christ who teaches all the faithful. And the Pope rarely speaks directly or writes directly to his faithful; often, however, he speaks through the medium of his bishops, and the line of transmission which leads to Jesus Christ is the bishops and the Pope. And it is thus that Jesus Christ makes His voice heard." Allow me to read certain parts of the address. "In doubt and uncertainty it is necessary to hearken to the words of the bishop. Give your attention; these words concern us very closely. Some criticise the action of the bishops whom they are able to believe to be excessive or defective. The Pope says: It is necessary to think with the bishop, to follow the bishop's action, to speak as the bishop speaks, because the bishop is the authentic interpreter of the Pope's thought. Let us not allow ourselves to be deceived by partisan spirit. As priests we have solemnly promised obedience to the bishop; let us make of this promise an obligation in conscience. If the bishop tells us to take five steps, we must not take three or seven, but five, because everything is calculated, everything measured for the good

of the diocese and for the good of souls. Now here, amongst us, there have been cases where it has been said by some that the Church interferes in political matters. This is not true. Every time I have been told that the Church interferes in politics, I have always replied : Quote for me the cases where the Church has interfered in politics; the individual action of the priest is not necessarily always the action of the Church; the Church is represented by the bishops. The Church does not enter into politics, but if political affairs touch religion and the interests of religion, it is our right and sacrosanct duty to interfere to defend the rights of religion.

It seems to be an axiom of our Government that, if a question is discussed in Parliament it becomes a political question, and they dare to ridicule the Vicar-General and to criticise the ecclesiastical authorities, who cannot reply because, it is said, the matter is political, and the protest of the bishops is called derogatory to the right of Parliament, and they are threatened with the penalties of the law.

I have always sought to be impartial with all political parties, to such an extent that each party believed that I favoured the opposing party. This is the best testimony to my neutrality; and if we have had to rise up, it has been because we felt ourselves under the obligation to defend the interests of the Church when we thought that the political action of the Government touched religion.

It is said : we are ready to obey the Pope and the bishops, but when the Pope is misinformed and the bishop badly surrounded, then we cannot give right to the word of the Pope and the instructions of the bishops. History teaches us that this has always been the excuse of heretics. Furthermore, certain people are heard to say that the Pope has decided badly because he has been badly informed, because he has relied on the reports of anonymous persons or of persons who are partisans. The Pope has done nothing of all this. The Pope has heard the Apostolic Delegate. I know positively that the bad impression the Apostolic Delegate received of the Prime Minister and the Constitutional Ministers, with which impression he left Malta, was given by the utterances of the Ministers themselves. You know how, during the first fortnight after his arrival, the Apostolic Delegate was invited and continually approached by the Government. During this time the members of the Government had every opportunity to explain to him their whole attitude and to expose their entire mentality. As it happens, during that fortnight, when the Government imagined it had won its case, Mgr. Robinson had received, from their own utterances, that bad impression. Thus, you now know how to reply when you are told that the Pope was badly impressed or badly informed by ecclesiastics or by anonymous writers. Nothing of the sort. The Apostolic Delegate came to enquire, examine and evaluate everything. The result we know from the well-known letter of Cardinal Gasparri.

Now we come to the practical part. The rule of the Church, as confirmed by the Holy Father, regarding political action is this : there should be no political action in favour of this or that party; but, however, in all your actions you must follow the action of the

bishop, you must do as he directs. In our case His Holiness has said: a certain Minister is not *persona grata* with us. The Pope refused to receive him, notwithstanding many insistences, and will not receive him until he give signs of sincere repentance. So have I also done recently. On my arrival in Malta I sent word to the head of the Ministry that I should not receive him until he gave signs of sincere repentance. It has been said that I refused to receive him in audience. This is not exact; I only thought it prudent to forestall such an affront so as to avoid unpleasant incidents.

Now, what attitude should we take up in our case? A negative attitude. Whoever of you, or of our clergy, after the words of the Holy Father, dared to say still that this Government has been badly treated by the Pope or that the Government is right in the religious question, would show himself a bad Catholic and as such will incur the canonical penalties. I shall not fail, in all severity, to take the most drastic measures provided in the sacred canons; because it is scandalous to see priests taking an attitude contrary to that of the bishop and to that of the Holy Father. I greatly regret to know that there are also religious who criticise the Pope's action. These, if they continue in this deplorable attitude, shall be reported to their superiors general. We hope that the necessity will not arise. We must be loyal to our superiors, to our bishop, to the Pope; loyalty to superiors and loyalty to Jesus Christ are one and the same thing; and how can we ever worthily wear the ecclesiastical habit and lay claim to being good priests, and then speak against the bishop and be disloyal to our superiors?

Now, one last thing: The Holy Father, in a private audience which he deigned to give to Mgr. Gonzi and to me, spoke to us of many things; and the principal means which he indicated to us for a satisfactory solution of our difficulties was prayer. "I pray every day for you," said His Holiness to us, "and you must encourage the faithful and make them pray for this end." We have the collect *Pro concordia;* this oration must continue to be recited. We wish, however, that in the Papal Benediction which you will give to the faithful, you will recall their attention to the necessity of praying for peace. We must keep in mind the words of the Holy Ghost: "*Nolo mortem peccatoris sed ut magis convertatur et vivat*"; we do not wish for such a victory, but we desire the liberty of the Church, we want peace with the Church, we want concord with the Government as we have had in the past. Pray, then, and make others pray, in a special way on the 21st instant, the 50th anniversary of the First Mass of the Holy Father, recommend all to offer Holy Communion on that day, according to the special intention of the Holy Father, that the change so much desired may be brought about among us.

No. 18.

Sir J. Du Cane to Lord Passfield.

(Extract.) *The Palace,*
My Lord, *Valletta, December* 28, 1929.

11. I HAVE the honour to state that, in my considered opinion, it is contrary to the best interests of the Maltese people that one political party in the Island should be in alliance with the Church against the other political party. I am, therefore, in favour of arriving at an agreement with the Vatican on the relations between Church and State in Malta in the hope that such an agreement will tend to remove the Church from the political sphere.

12. I believe diplomatic negotiations of this nature are usually protracted and that it is unlikely that they can be brought to a conclusion before the late spring or early summer, when the elections are likely to take place in Malta.

13. In order to further the policy I have indicated I consider it very desirable that Mr. Chilton should endeavour to obtain from the Vatican as soon as possible, and in any case before the elections, a pronouncement, that can be made public, that they disapprove of priests taking an active part in elections and of priests being candidates for the Legislative Assembly; such a pronouncement to be without prejudice to further discussions.

14. I fully recognise the danger of such a policy being wrecked by premature public discussion in Malta, and I am prepared to use all my influence, with Lord Strickland on one side, if the Vatican will do the same on the other, to prevent such discussions taking place.

I have, &c.
J. P. DU CANE, *Governor.*

No. 19.

Lord Passfield to Sir J. Du Cane.

(Telegram.) *February* 1, 1930.

HIS Majesty's Government's position is that they will do their best to negotiate the proposed Concordat with Vatican at the proper moment. But it is essential that atmosphere should not be disturbed by utterances of Maltese Ministers which are likely to provoke Vatican if negotiations are to be conducted with any hope of success.

His Majesty's Government, who are anxious to do all in their power to preserve a serene atmosphere in which to conduct negotiations, are, in these circumstances, willing to endeavour to

obtain if possible from Vatican a pronouncement regarding the participation of priests in politics on the lines suggested in your despatch of the 28th December, 1929. His Majesty's Government could, however, only attempt this if you can place them in a position to furnish in return an undertaking on behalf of Lord Strickland, for communication to Vatican, to the effect that he, on his side, will, as far as he is able, restrain his supporters from making provocative utterances during the negotiations for Concordat. From now onwards it is essential that everything should be done to allow the atmosphere to calm down.

As you will see from Mr. Chilton's despatch to Foreign Office of the 27th December, 1929,* he has already represented to Cardinal Secretary of State the undesirability of such utterances as those made recently by archbishop.

No. 20.

Pro-Memoriâ on the Activities of Lord Strickland in Malta with regard to the Catholic Church handed to Mr. Chilton by the Cardinal Secretary of State on January 29, 1930.

(Translation.)

Although Lord Strickland has always professed himself to be a *Catholic*, the manner in which he has behaved and is behaving, especially towards the clergy and the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, is openly in contrast with the most elementary duties of a practising Catholic. And it is for this reason that his actions have aroused the painful conflict in the heart of the population of Malta, always jealous of their faith and of their Catholic traditions.

I.

Already in the fourteen years during which Lord Strickland was secretary to the Governor of Malta, his inspiration was said to be responsible for certain measures, hostile to the clergy and to religion, which were sincerely deplored by the ecclesiastical authorities and by the people.

But the anti-clerical attitude of Lord Strickland's policy became more apparent when, after his return from his long sojourn in Australia, he became head of the Constitutional party.

As a proof of this it will suffice to quote the following facts—selected from many instances :—

1. On the occasion of the first political elections Lord Strickland went personally to the Island of Gozo, and immediately on his arrival approaching some of the natives of the island, enquired of them—to their great astonishment—who were the priests who

* No. 17, page 42.

were in conflict with their own parish priest and with the bishops. And it was counting on such ambiguous and undisciplined elements that he began to conduct his electoral campaign in Gozo.

2. He exerted himself in every way to violate article 1 of the Constitution of Malta, which reads: "The religion of Malta is the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion," proposing that the word "*Roman*," should be suppressed. Thus it was evident he could only disgust and offend the Catholics, for whom the word "Roman" was precisely the expression which distinguished the Catholic religion from all other Christian confessions.

3. The speeches insulting to the Holy See made by Lord Strickland in the Assembly during the discussion of the Bill for the official recognition of Pontifical titles in Malta and her dependencies are known to everyone. In order to give an idea of their offensive tone you have only to read these speeches as published in the "Debates," Session 1923–24, Part I, Volume VI.

It will suffice to mention some of the most serious statements, *e.g.*, that which calls the Vatican "a business concern." Speaking of the august person of the Pope, he ostentatiously employs the expression, in this context by no means popular with Catholics, of *Bishop of Rome*. He even went so far as to hurl the insult that for a small sum even a horse could be made a Papal Marquis. He said, in fact—these are his actual words—"A prominent member of the Labour party, who has recently been in Rome, has informed his friends that for a *small amount of money* he would get his horse made a (Pope's) Marquis."

This statement naturally aroused the indignation of the Members of Parliament and of the public, whose reaction was a demonstration of sympathy towards Rome. The two bishops—of Malta and of Gozo—felt themselves bound publicity to censure the conduct of Lord Strickland ("Debates," Session 1923–24, Volume 7, Part II, pp. 1031 and 1055).

4. When Lord Strickland started his first club in the city, he made a freemason president of it. Some of his followers, with the badge of his party in their buttonholes, insulted priests in the streets by shouting: "Long live Calles!"

5. The attitude of Lord Strickland's press towards the clergy is well known to everyone. Those who have been able to follow it carefully for several years have found that it never missed a chance of slandering the clergy themselves on insufficient evidence, not one holy ("sacro") personage was spared, not even a thing unheard of in Malta—the august person of the Vicar of Christ.

Here, for example, are some questions selected from many:—

(1) In the paper printed in Maltese called "Il Progress," belonging to Lord Strickland, in the issue of the 21st October, 1921, a prize in money was offered to the readers who could suggest the best reasons for the removal of the old saintly Bishop of Gozo, Mgr. Camilleri, and a second prize, also in money

(10 lire) to whoever would discover and publish some immorality in the life of the parish priests of Gozo. On this occasion the Archbishop of Malta published a letter of protest against these publications, dated the 25th October, 1921.

(2) In the "Malta Herald" of the 23rd January, 1922, appeared an article over the signature of Gerald Strickland in which Benedict XV was accused of partisanship in the European War, and it was added that this conduct of the Pope would remain for ever in the future an obstacle in the relations with the Governments of Europe. In the same article Lord Strickland added the following words: "It was his (Pope Benedict's) work to re-establish the diplomatic prestige of the Papacy, which was wonderfully preserved *from extinction* during the reign of his predecessor by the uncommon ability and self-sacrifice of Cardinal Merry del Val, who, in accordance with cast-iron etiquette of the Vatican management, was put aside when the very junior Cardinal Della Chiesa was given the triple crown in *the place* of this most accomplished ecclesiastic of the generation. Until the cardinals select an American or Spaniard as Pope, it will appear that the Italians are having undue weight against Catholicity in the truest sense of the word."

(3) The "Malta Herald Monday" of the 22nd February, 1922, published an article, also signed "Gerald Strickland," which ran: "Fifty years ago Catholics in Malta were taught that it was disreputable for a priest to make money otherwise than 'by the altar,' but a member of the Assembly, in discussing gambling, informed the Assembly that our morals are changing. Some priests and 'Roman Catholics' support gambling and others the masked balls."

(4) In the "Malta Herald" of the 19th April, 1922, the same Strickland again wrote "the clergy should open their eyes to the fact that too great a study of Italian literature and the love it instils for Italian views of politics and religion is certain to react against the Church in the long run. The reaction has already begun, and is spreading in Valletta the consequences which are not desired, the cause should be checked." This publication was denounced by the "Daily Malta Chronicle" itself as an illegitimate and most deplorable move.

(5) From an article (in English) *signed by Gerald Strickland*, published in the "Malta Herald" of the 31st October, 1922, entitled "The Labour party." After having attacked the Labour party, to whom he was then inimical because they had yielded too much to the Nationalist party on a point in the programme concerning the question of the language, the article concludes thus:—

"The authorities of a Church founded on divine truth should indeed be on their guard. If they are conniving at such kind of political *immorality*, they are only threatening the true authority and provoking the reaction such as has happened in Ireland. In Malta the Church is still inclined to save its own prestige, but it should take great care not to sacrifice the English education of the working classes to the egoistical, fanatical irredentists (pro-Italians),

or to the personal interests of those who are ignorant of the English language."

(6) The same accusation is repeated in other words in the sitting of the Assembly of the 16th April, 1923 (see "Parliamentary Debates," pp. 1123–24). " . . . . After 120 years you have kept 80 per cent. in ignorance. You claim to be patriots and some of you are dressed in the garb of priests. . . . ." (Hon Members: order, order.) "Mr. Speaker, priests can only teach religion, and if they do not want to be attacked, *they should uphold the Maltese language*. This is the only way . . . . the people will go against these priests, who are Italian politicians first and priests afterwards. We are tired of them, and so are the people."

Now to assert that the priests are rather "*Italian politicians*" than "*priests*" because in the exercise of their Ministry and for the good of souls they employ Italian, which is a language permitted and spoken in the island, not forbidden by any law, not even before the (régime of) autonomy, is to make a grave accusation without any grounds therefor. While to insist that the clergy "should uphold the Maltese language" would be actually to oblige the clergy to take sides politically, to the detriment of their own religious Ministry.

(7) In the "Times of Malta," a weekly paper owned by Lord Strickland, of the 20th April, 1923, in the article entitled "Irredentism drops the mask" can be read the words: "The Duke of Devonshire should be reminded that France lost Malta *through the influence of the Vatican;* that to-day Signor Mussolini *has much to* offer to the Vatican, and that the Vatican may be open to bargain in various directions, and that France is striving hard to bargain with that Power."

(8) In the "Malta Herald" of the 25th July, 1923. Lord Strickland wrote: "It is in the public interest that all, high or low, from Lord Plumer downwards, *whoever* they may be, should be mercilessly criticised if they support, directly or indirectly, the conspiracy to oppress the poor by keeping 80 per cent. in ignorance." Alluding no doubt to the clergy, who, to-day, after similar articles, are accused by their many enemies in Malta of wishing to keep the people in ignorance in order to be able to exploit them.

(9) In the "Malta Herald" of the 22nd January, 1923, he wrote: "Mgr. Ferris has received excessive attention from Englishmen and women in authority, for which he shows his gratitude by proposing extreme *pari passu* in defiance of the Constitution. Is this in accordance with the Oath of Office of a Minister of the Crown? Theological Casuists will be found to advise both ways, so long as priests are allowed to be friends of Italian Free Masons and to condemn them at the same time for political reasons."

(10) On the 23rd November, 1925, an article over the name of "Spectator" (Lord Strickland, as he was later to admit) appeared in the "Daily Malta Chronicle" entitled "An appeal

to Englishmen," in which the priests of Gozo were accused of having used the confessional and the pulpit to threaten with punishments in the next world those who wished to vote for Lord Strickland's party. This article was condemned by the Bishop of Gozo, in an open letter to the Archdeacon of the Diocese, dated the 27th November, 1925, in which he accused Lord Strickland of his Voltairian policy, and gave the lie to the accusations made against the clergy of Gozo.

This is the sort of language used against the clergy in the newspapers, where the possibility of a lawsuit was always to be feared. In Parliament, where he enjoyed parliamentary immunity, Lord Strickland employed an even freer tone.

To give an example of these expressions, offensive to the clergy, made by Lord Strickland, the following appeared in the "Midday News" of the 19th July, 1928:—

(*a*) "An honourable and reverend member, who was so carried away in Parliament that he misquoted the Creed, that he says at Mass every day." (Sir G. Strickland in the "Malta Herald" of the 19th November, 1921.)

(*b*) "Mgr. Panzavecchia was put up as a nominal leader because he was more a politician than a priest." ("Debates," 9.III.22.)

(*c*) "Mgr. Hili cannot approve that M. Dalli should be paid nearly twice the salary of the Bishop of Gozo and as much as a dozen canons, especially in view of the brevity of M. Dalli's ecclesiastical career."

(*d*) "The little priest (Mgr. Dandria) who had succeeded in blinding his conscience." ("Debates," 10.III.22.)

(*e*) "Dr. Borg Grech showed that his conscience is above the average, and Canon Bugelli made a speech about his conscience and that of the Reverend Dandria, which may bear fruit later on." ("Debates," 3.V.22.)

(*f*) "When priests come to meetings they should be exemplary and not spread lies." ("Debates," 13.III.22.)

(*g*) "The apparently pious Canon Ferris."

(*h*) "The calumny for which their reverend editor had made himself responsible."

(*i*) "Mgr. Ferris voted against freedom of speech and the upholding of the wishes of his bishop." ("Debates," 1.IV.22.)

(*j*) "Priests who go in for making money." ("Debates," 6.XII.22.)

(*k*) "Howardite clericalism is hardly as good as the Gozitan, although they have a priest in the Cabinet." ("Debates," 29.XI.22.)

II.

Since Lord Strickland, moreover, has become head of the Government of Malta, also by virtue of Catholic votes, his anti-clerical policy has become even more aggressive.

1. He began by attacking in their capacity of priests the ecclesiastics who are Members of Parliament.

Thus, as an example, as long as Canon Bugelli represented the Labour party in the House he was called by Lord Strickland "the pious Bugelli"; when, however, the latter, fearing an encroachment of subversive elements and thinking it well to abandon the Labour party, give his support to the Nationalist party, he was then called by Lord Strickland "a renegade, the canon without a conscience."

Lord Strickland often offended Mgr. Dandria (Minister of Public Instruction until 1927) criticising even his nomination as canon of the cathedral made by the Holy See and attacking his moral character.

Lord Strickland behaved in a similar manner towards Mgr. Ferris. The latter, however, on account of certain calumnies by Lord Strickland which appeared in the press, summoned him before the tribunal in the Criminal Court and the Court of Appeal gave judgment against Lord Strickland.

The person who insulted the clergy in Parliament was the same Lord Strickland, who on the 21st July, 1923, had written in the "Malta Herald," "I have always upheld the right of the clergy to sit in Parliament, and have not only proposed but have insisted to the Colonial Office that a special representative of the clergy should be provided in the Constitution of 1887."

2. When the representatives of the clergy in the Senate, unable to approve any longer the policy of Lord Strickland's Government, voted against the Law of Approval of the General Estimates, Lord Strickland launched every sort of abuse; then with violent publications containing falsehoods and calumnies he tried to incite the mass of the people against the authority of the Church, portraying the priests as oppressors of the working classes. This led to:—

(*a*) Hostile demonstrations under the windows of the Archbishop's palace, with horrible profanity against Christ the King.

In the circular of the 12th July, 1928, the Archbishop of Malta in a circular deplored the event and exhorted the people to make public reparation for the blasphemies. Meanwhile, as a reply to this religious act of the Archbishop, the ministerial newspaper, the "Daily Malta Chronicle," owned by Professor Bartolo, at present Minister of Education, appeared with the irreverent comment "the inaccuracy and precipitancy of his Grace the Archbishop's circular, however, are its least objectionable features," concluding that the archbishop, in deploring, as he had, the regrettable incidents, had fallen into the fallacy of "much ado about nothing."

(*b*) The leaflet entitled "Who does not vote money for work is the executioner of the workman," "Min ma jivvutax flus ghax xoghol hua il bojja tal haddiema," printed by Lord Strickland's printing office, and distributed by his party, where, amongst other things is written: "To the Senators Terinisti with full stomachs and fed by the wages of the Senate, your discomforts are of no account; they earn as much as they wish, and perhaps more, from the courts and chapters of canons; for them your tears are as the wine they drink before their dessert. This is a real vendetta

against the blood of the Maltese workman, and for this vendetta they will have to render account to God in the future."

The Archbishop of Malta, fulfilling the obligation of his ministry, took up the defence of his clergy and showed the falsity of the calumny with which they had tried to defame them. Thus, he published a letter to his vicar-general, of which it may here be opportune to transcribe the principal parts :—

" The only idea of the representatives of the clergy in voting the sums exceeding 86,000 lire of the *reserve fund* for the special works was that of the good of the people and especially that of the poor. To this end the above-mentioned sum was voted.

" At the last sitting of the Senate, during which only questions of legality and formality were dealt with, it was the Hon. Mgr. Cannon Zammit who, during the sitting, approached the Government in order that, on the following day, a sitting might be held for the voting of money for the works of the ' Harper Area ' and on the suggestion of the Government itself, also of the Hospital.

" We do not know, however, what party spirit could have thus blinded the mind of the author of the pamphlet, ' Min ma jivvutax flus ghax xoghol hua il bojja tal haddiema.' ' He who does not vote money for work is the executioner of the workman,' and that of the author of the article which appeared in the ' Hmar ' of the 14th July, 1928, and permitted them to write what they wrote relative to the Senators representing the clergy.

" We will hope, most Reverend Signor Vicario, that no one will believe the false insinuations which have appeared, sowers of class-hatred, and that all who have not lost their religious feeling condemn, together with us, the spirit of discord which is not that of our Lord the Prince of Peace."

(*c*) Both the Archbishop of Malta and the Bishop of Gozo did not fail to approach Lord Strickland, exhorting him to put an end to this fiery *anti-social and anti-clerical* campaign; he answered the bishops with threatening and resentful letters, and, a few days afterwards, declared in the Chamber that, instead of stopping the publications of that nature, he was ready to resign from the office of commissary of police in order *to have his hands freer,* and in order to be able to intensify still more such publications.

(*d*) Things being thus, the two representatives of the clergy in the Senate decided not to take part at the sittings, so long as such a state of affairs prevailed in the Senate, where they were often insulted, and outside in the ministerial press, and they did this for the reasons indicated in their letter addressed to the President of the Senate. On the reading of this letter, Lord Strickland was much upset, and, declaring, in rising to speak, that he felt " the disadvantage and the handicap of being a practical Catholic," he made the following statement: He said: " We are no longer governed by prejudice and unlimited authority "; and observed " that the time was past when the ecclesiastical authorities could interfere in civil matters," proceeded to qualify the letter of the

two Senators of the clergy as "a declaration of war for the next elections," which he accepted without fear because, in Malta, "the women have no vote," and because "he could trust the men of Malta," so that from this declaration of war he could only come out victorious. He concluded his speech as follows: "Let them remember that if educated and practical Catholics in this country, or in any other country, are to have their chance in trade or politics, then those who are in the position of the ecclesiastical authorities should *not make blunders that are inexcusable.*"

(*e*) In the sitting of the 21st February, 1929, he attacked in a vulgar manner the then Vicar-General of Malta, Mgr. Camilleri, going so far as to apply to him a very offensive nick-name. The Archbishop of Malta again saw himself forced by duty to write to his vicar a public letter of protest against the atrocity of the calumny brought against him; in it he categorically denied the calumny and pointed out how such a scandalous and offensive incident obliged him to define, condemning it, as anti-clerical, the policy of Lord Strickland.

3. These attempts to incite the working classes against the clergy by means of insinuations, calumnies and misstatements of facts; these insults hurled, one might say, daily by the Parliamentary Tribune and by the press against the religious authorities of the islands, and against the Archbishop Caruana himself, a man most devoted to the Empire and full of respect towards the person of Lord Strickland himself, were more than sufficient motives to create an open breach between Church and Government, and to constrain the ecclesiastical authorities to declare the policy of Lord Strickland hostile to the Church and even harmful to public peace. But there are other reasons even more serious which it is necessary to denounce; because they offend even more directly the Catholic Church and violate its sacred rights.

Here as proof are some examples:—

(*a*) In order to safeguard public morality the Archiepiscopal Curia of Malta was forced to the painful duty of condemning the weekly "Hmar" (the "Donkey"). Lord Strickland on this occasion accepting (if not soliciting as is generally said and believed) the interpellation of a member of his party about the indemnity to be given to the proprietor of the periodical answered with the following malevolent insinuation against the same Archiepiscopal Curia of Malta:—"The Government is not liable to pay damages to the owner of the 'Hmar,' but there is legal opinion to the effect that, if the ecclesiastical censure had been on political or personal reasons and not on religious ground, an action for civil damages could be brought against an officer of the Curia."

(*b*) In June of 1928 there arose between the Bishop of Gozo and the Government a question concerning the nomination of the chaplain of the Government hospitals. The bishop insisted that such nominations should be made according to the custom introduced under former Governments; that is, of leaving the designation of individuals in the hands of the bishop or making it a matter of

common understanding between the bishop and the Government. Lord Strickland would not yield and the bishop on his side continued to insist on his right. Finally, after having created public unrest, the Government yielded in homage to the religious sentiment of the people of Gozo and stipulated on an accord in which the right formerly maintained by the Bishop of Gozo should be now recognised to the Bishops of Malta and Gozo. Meanwhile, in discussing the question in the Chamber on the 4th January, 1929 ("Debates" III, Parliament 4th Session, p. 313), Lord Strickland, in contradiction to the facts, said : "In reply to the reference to the appointment of the Chaplain in Gozo, the action of the Government was fully and amply justified, and those who at first thought otherwise" (*i.e.*, the Bishop of Gozo) "discovered the terrible mistake that they were about to make and *withdrew entirely* from a false position in claiming rights which cannot be claimed against the Government, and in which the Government has not departed one hair's breadth from duty or from the policy of their predecessors."

It was customary that two members of the clergy should make part of the Government Commission for benefices, and one in the Commission for the Religious Surveillance in the management of the Library. It is obvious, therefore, that being a matter of priests who are part of the commission, not as private persons but as representatives of the Catholic religion, their nomination should be made in accordance with the legitimate ecclesiastical authority; thus it had always been in the past. At Gozo, however, these nominations of the three members of the clergy came directly from the Government without any notice given to the bishop.

(*c*) While Lord Strickland was treating the Catholic bishops with so little regard, great amazement and displeasure was caused to the Maltese people by the fact that the same Lord Strickland, in January, 1929, authorised three Protestant bishops to hold lectures in the Governor's palace. There are certain regards due to the faith of a people which Lord Strickland could not dispense with without running the risk of offending the people.

(*d*) It has always been a tacit right of the Catholic Church to send Visitors to Religious Houses to take steps against religious without regard to their nationality and for purely canonical motives.

Now it is known how Lord Strickland behaved with regard to Father Carta, a Franciscan conventual sent to Malta to re-establish religious discipline in his Convent. Lord Strickland made every sort of insinuation about the said Father who has an excellent religious record, even attempting to drag him before the civil courts for entirely unjustified motives. Equally, Lord Strickland, without any right, opposed the departure of Father Micaleff and upheld him in every way, pretending to ignore the fact that the latter was a religious, or that on the strength of his solemn profession he was freely bound by the oath of obedience to his legitimate religious superiors.

The Vatican, January 29, 1930.

No. 21.

Mr. Chilton to Mr. A. Henderson.

British Legation to the Holy See,
Rome, February 7, 1930.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that, this morning, I again reminded the Cardinal Secretary of State of his promise to let me have some suggestions as a basis on which we could negotiate an agreement with regard to Malta. I pointed out that it was over three months since the Vatican had expressed their willingness to negotiate, but that nothing constructive had happened so far.

2. His Eminence said that he had not forgotten his promise and that I should receive something on the subject very soon.

I have, &c.
H. G. CHILTON.

No. 22.

Memorandum from Maltese Ministers on the Pledge asked from Lord Strickland for communication to the Vatican, February 12, 1930.

LORD STRICKLAND, Head of the Ministry, has laid before his colleagues, the following note of a verbal communication from His Excellency the Governor, viz. :—

(*a*) His Majesty's Government is willing at an opportune moment to enter upon negotiations with the Vatican for a concordat, keeping in view in the discussion the draft submitted by the Government of Malta after conference with Mgr. Robinson. It is not probable that the negotiations could be concluded before the general elections, and it is necessary that the negotiations be carried on in a calm atmosphere free from disturbing utterances.

(*b*) His Majesty's Government will endeavour to obtain from the Vatican, before the general elections, a pronouncement, to be made public, disapproving of the clergy being candidates for, and taking part in, elections.

(*c*) Provided that an undertaking be given by Lord Strickland, to be communicated to the Vatican by His Majesty's representative in Rome, that the Head of the Ministry, as far as he is able, will restrain his supporters from making provocative utterances during the negotiation of the concordat.

2. In reply, Ministers beg leave to record their grateful appreciation of the decision of His Majesty's Government to negotiate a concordat with the Vatican.

3. Ministers also wish to express their thanks to his Excellency the Governor for the efforts which have resulted in the conditional offer by His Majesty's Government to obtain the pronouncement in paragraph (*b*).

4. It is desired to place on record that (in deference to the lead given by his Excellency Sir John Du Cane) the supporters of Ministers in Parliament have already been enjoined in most earnest terms, which will be repeated and upheld by the sanctions available in the party organization, to observe the attitude desired by His Majesty's Government in order to facilitate the negotiation of the concordat.

5. Ministers beg leave to place on record that, after special consideration in Cabinet, last September, Ministers obtained the exercise of restraint in the newspapers under their control, following an understanding, through representatives of the Labour party, with the Acting Bishop of Malta. This restraint was maintained in regard to matters in dispute, until, on his return from Rome, Archbishop Caruana delivered to the parish priests and other assembled ecclesiastics, an address* which appears irreconcilable with the allocution of His Holiness the Pope to the Maltese and Gozitan pilgrims delivered in Rome on the 22nd August, 1929. Retort to many provocative ecclesiastical pronouncements has been repressed as far as possible, and has been restricted within sober and measured terms, and coupled with appeals in favour of re-establishing normal relations.

5. Lord Strickland and his colleagues will convey fresh injunctions to their supporters urging increased caution in the desired direction. These instructions will be communicated personally by Lord Strickland to the managers and editors of the only three newspapers in which he has any financial interest, viz.: the "Times of Malta," "Progress" (in Maltese) and "Ix-Xemx" (the "Sun" also in the vernacular). Sir Augustus Bartolo as part owner of the "Daily Malta Chronicle" (in which Lord Strickland has no financial or other interest) will undertake to ensure parallel action.

6. The members of the Labour party, working in accord with the Constitutionals, will be asked to adopt a co-ordinated policy.

STRICKLAND,
Head of the Ministry.

February 12, 1930.

* See Enclosure in No. 17, page 42.

No. 23.

Memorandum from Maltese Ministers, February 12, 1930. (Extract.)

4. It should be understood that Lord Strickland, as well as all Ministers and their supporters, would consider themselves free from pledges if a dissolution takes place before the said pronouncement of the Vatican is made; or should there be further developments of the attacks indicated in the enclosed address of the archbishop to the parish priests* which does not appear to Ministers to be in accord with the spirit of the allocution of His Holiness the Pope to the Maltese and Gozitan pilgrims delivered in Rome on the 22nd April 1929.

5. The object of Ministers in recording the above reservation is not dictated by any desire or intention to depart from the pledge given; but the reservation is rendered necessary by the present state of affairs, which indicates no abatement in the anti-Government campaign on the part of a considerable number of the clergy, and of the official organ in the vernacular of the archbishop's curia.

STRICKLAND,
Head of the Ministry.

February 12, 1930.

No. 24.

Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. Chilton.

(Telegram.) *February* 24, 1930.

Lord Strickland has given the proposed undertaking on the understanding that it automatically lapses (1) if further attacks by the archbishop, such as his recent address to parish priests, take place, or (2) if before a dissolution the Vatican do not publicly disapprove of the clergy being candidates and taking part in elections.

You should see the Cardinal Secretary of State and express the hope that, as an earnest of their goodwill and without prejudice to future negotiations, the Vatican will co-operate with His Majesty's Government in exercising a moderating influence on the relations between Church and State in Malta throughout the election period by the immediate issue of authoritative instructions to the Maltese hierarchy clergy that, during this period, they should—

(1) make no controversial and provocative pronouncements affecting relations between the hierarchy and civil administration;

(2) endeavour to suppress unfriendly criticisms of the proposal to negotiate a concordat between the Holy See and His Majesty's Government by means of which relations between Church and State in Malta will be regulated;

* See Enclosure in No. 17, page 42.

(3) refrain from standing as candidates for the Legislative Assembly and from participating actively in local politics, more particularly during the electoral campaign.

If the Vatican enquire whether Lord Strickland and his supporters will also pledge themselves to refrain from pronouncement likely to be prejudicial to relations between Church and State you may communicate the substance of paragraph 1 above.

No. 25.

Aide-mémoire handed to the Cardinal Secretary of State by Mr. Chilton on February 26, 1930, on Instructions from Mr. A. Henderson.

His Majesty's Government express the hope that the Vatican will, as an earnest of their goodwill and without prejudice to future negotiations between His Majesty's Government and the Holy See on the subject of Malta, assist His Majesty's Government in preventing relations between the Church and State in Malta from being further embittered during the period preceding the forthcoming elections and during the elections themselves by giving immediate and authoritative instructions to the Maltese clergy that during this period they should :—

1. Abstain from active participation in local politics, more particularly in connexion with the impending election campaign, and from standing as candidates for the Legislative Assembly.
2. Refrain from controversial and provocative pronouncements regarding the relations between the Hierarchy and the Civil Administration.
3. Prevent as far as possible unfriendly criticisms of the policy of regulating relations between Church and State in Malta by means of a concordat negotiated through the diplomatic channel by the Holy See and His Majesty's Government.

No. 26.

Mr. Randall to Mr. A. Henderson.

British Legation to the Holy See,
Rome, March 7, 1930.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that this morning I had a very long conversation with the Cardinal Secretary of State, on the subject of the desire of His Majesty's Government that the Vatican, in return for an undertaking from Lord Strickland not to attack the Maltese clergy, should give instructions that the clergy should

refrain from active participation in politics, and should not stand as candidates in the elections.

2. The Cardinal expressed complete scepticism regarding the value of a verbal promise from Lord Strickland. Lord Strickland's attitude to the bishops and clergy, he said in effect, had been so hostile that only deeds could really bring about a fundamental change in the situation. I replied that Lord Strickland had really made the promise to His Majesty's Government, but the Cardinal said that he did not understand that His Majesty's Government were responsible for Lord Strickland. I said that His Majesty's Government were exclusively responsible for the conduct of negotiations with the Holy See affecting Malta, but the Cardinal rejoined that most of the instances of Lord Strickland's attacks on the clergy came under the heading of internal politics and were, he thought, a matter exclusively for the Maltese Government and the people that elected it. I said that all this was past, and in view of the promise Lord Strickland had made, which surely indicated a desire to tranquillise the situation, I would ask whether the Holy See could not see its way to restrain the Maltese clergy from active political campaigning, which seemed to be directed against one party only, a partisanship which I ventured to suggest was against the interest of the Church. I mentioned that there was, I thought, some provision in the law of the Church regarding the participation of priests in party politics. The cardinal said there was, and produced the Codex of Canon Law which, by article 139, paragraph 4, subjects such participation to the authority of the Holy See in some instances and to the local bishops in others. Malta is in the latter category. The Church, the cardinal said, stood above party politics, but when the religious interests of the Church were concerned, when the hierarchy and clergy were slandered and their prestige attacked, their influence undermined, it could not be denied that the clergy should enjoy the same rights as other citizens. I replied that during the last elections there had, I believed, been abuses of this right; the churches had been used for the purpose of partisan propaganda. The cardinal said abuses were, of course, possible, but his information was that in the 1927 elections the attitude of the bishops had been prudent, impartial and correct and had even received the praise of Lord Strickland's newspaper as a consequence. I said this was no guarantee of prudence in the coming elections and asked the Cardinal whether at least the Holy See would issue counsels of prudence to the bishops. The cardinal asked me whether I could give him examples of imprudence, and I instanced the archbishop's address to the parish priests. But this, the cardinal said, was not a political attack; it could not be said that the archbishop had done, or was doing anything to undermine British influence in Malta. I then pressed the cardinal to agree to examine any instances of abuse which I might be able to produce, and his Eminence said that I had raised a question outside the scope of His Majesty's Minister's aide-mémoire. His reply to this had, to his regret at not being able to

meet His Majesty's Government's wishes, been to the effect that the Holy See could not feel any confidence in Lord Strickland's promise; they could only judge by deeds, and would leave the matter in general to the discretion of the bishops. If, outside the scope of the aide-mémoire there were other questions, he would be very willing to examine them, and in particular to receive particulars of clerical abuse in purely political matters.

I have, &c.

A. W. G. RANDALL, *Chargé d'Affaires.*

No. 27.

Mr. Chilton to Mr. A. Henderson.

(Extracts.) *British Legation to the Holy See,*
Sir, *Rome, March* 14, 1930.

I SPOKE to the Cardinal Secretary of State to-day on the subject of Malta, and left an aide-mémoire with his Eminence, a copy of which is enclosed herein.

2. Cardinal Pacelli reverted to the subject of the instructions which His Majesty's Government desired should be given by the Vatican to priests in Malta to abstain from interfering in politics during the forthcoming elections. He said that he very much regretted that no such instructions could be given, because it was felt that, whereas the priests could no doubt be counted upon to obey such instructions, what guarantee was there that Lord Strickland would keep his word?*

4. I then enquired why, if the Vatican could not accept Lord Strickland's assurances, should we consider the accusations of anonymous witnesses, whose complaints against Lord Strickland had never been substantiated as far as we were concerned. I said I thought Lord Strickland ought at least to be given the opportunity to demonstrate his good faith, and I made the suggestion that the Vatican should at least issue the instructions we desired to the priests in Malta on the understanding that if Lord Strickland broke his undertaking, the priests should be absolved from theirs. The cardinal said he could not even do that. The priests, he said, had behaved correctly in recent elections. Lord Strickland had even admitted that. There was no reason why they should not behave in the same manner again. He did not anticipate that they would do more than see that their interests were protected.

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* The Holy See's comment on this passage is as follows:—

That is not exact, as may be seen from the following *note in the archives* ("Nota d'Archivio") which Cardinal Pacelli handed to the Secretariat of State on the day following the conversation, that is, the 15th March:—

"As to the instructions which the Government again request should be given to the clergy, I again confirm the impossibility of acceding to such a request for the reasons already explained to him several times. With regard to the negotiations for a Concordat, I told him that His Holiness had informed me on that very morning that he could not consent to the same as long as Lord Strickland was in power."

6. I then pointed out once more that all these accusations against Lord Strickland made in the *pro-memoriâ* of the 29th January* got us nowhere. We made no progress with our discussion. Cardinal Pacelli said that he could tell me quite frankly that no negotiations for a concordat were possible as long as Lord Strickland was in power. The Pope had said so quite definitely. I asked then why the Vatican, in their communication to Mr. Randall of the 13th October† had agreed to negotiate through the diplomatic channel. No stipulation had been made in that *pro-memoriâ* to the effect that the initiation of any negotiations depended on whether or not Lord Strickland were in power. The cardinal replied that he had not been in office then, and could not remember the exact wording of the communication in question.

7. It looks, therefore, as if there is no hope whatsoever of inducing the Vatican to intervene with the bishops with a view to instructing the priests not to interfere in political affairs, and still less of initiating concordat negotiations so long as Lord Strickland is in power.

I have, &c.
H. G. CHILTON.

Enclosure in No. 27.

Aide-mémoire.

THE presentation by the Holy See on the 29th January of the *pro-memoriâ** regarding Lord Strickland seems to His Majesty's Government to indicate a misunderstanding of the essential object of the forthcoming negotiations on the subject of Malta. It therefore seems convenient to recapitulate the course of events which have led up to the present situation.

His Majesty's Government first became involved in the quarrel between the Church in Malta and the Maltese Administration in January 1929. The occasion was the controversy which arose over the attempt made by Father Carta, head of the Franciscan order in Malta, to remove from the island one of his monks, a certain Micallef, who was a British subject. This attempt was countered by Lord Strickland with the threat to expel Father Carta, who was an Italian, as an undesirable alien. Eventually the Maltese Chamber passed a resolution asking that His Majesty's Government should invite the Vatican to send a fully authorised representative to Malta to enquire into the controversy regarding Micallef. His Majesty's Government agreed to approach the Vatican in this sense, but in so doing decided to base their request on considerably broader grounds than merely the Micallef incident. The official note which His Majesty's Minister addressed to Cardinal Gasparri on the 1st March, 1929, made it absolutely clear that His Majesty's

* No. 20, page 47. † No 15, page 39.

Government regarded the participation of the Maltese clergy in local politics as the primary cause of the disturbed state in the island.

The Vatican acceded to the request of His Majesty's Government and sent Mgr. Robinson to Malta as Apostolic Visitor. His Majesty's Government have always held that the original object of his mission was primarily to provide a means for preventing the Maltese priesthood from taking part in politics, and not in any sense to formulate accusations against the Maltese Administration and Lord Strickland in particular.

Mgr. Robinson returned in due course to Rome and made a report to the Vatican on his mission; and there is reason to believe that this report was of a moderate character and contained the outlines of a reasonable settlement. Before, however, any discussions could take place with regard to the matter between His Majesty's Minister and the Vatican, the latter precipitated a crisis in July by issuing public instructions to the Maltese Hierarchy to oppose and obstruct Lord Strickland's administration, and by denouncing Lord Strickland to His Majesty's Legation as *persona non grata*, and formally accusing him of persecuting the Church. An exchange of notes resulted, extending over a period of several months, in the course of which His Majesty's Government, after protesting strongly against the improper action thus taken by the Vatican, finally proposed "that the only constitutional way of putting an end to the present strained relations between Church and State in Malta was by initiating negotiations through the diplomatic channel with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, who are responsible for the direction of foreign affairs in Malta. The Vatican, in reply, agreed "with His Majesty's Government in initiating negotiations through the diplomatic channel with the object of putting an end to so painful a situation." The Vatican note went on, however, to state that "at the outset of the discussions in question it will be as well to remember that that principal, if not the sole, cause of the disturbed religious condition in Malta has been the anti-clerical attitude of Lord Strickland since he first arrived." His Majesty's Government were careful not to acquiesce in this statement, and in reply which His Majesty's Minister handed to Cardinal Gasparri on the 20th December, the attention of the Vatican was called to Mr. Chilton's note of the 1st March, and emphasis was laid on the view of His Majesty's Government that the primary cause of the trouble was the political activity of the Maltese clergy and not the anti-clerical attitude of Lord Strickland.

It is true that in the same communication His Majesty's Minister recognised the fact that the forthcoming negotiations would afford an opportunity "to examine and dispose of the accusations made by the Holy See against the Maltese Administration last summer." The fact remains, however, that, in the view of His Majesty's Government, the primary and essential object of the negotiations was, and still is, the exclusion of the Maltese priesthood from local politics and only incidentally, as part of the major

question, the examination of the accusations which the Vatican have since made against Lord Strickland, and which, in any case, cannot be put forward as a justification of the political activities of the Maltese clergy. It was precisely in order to enforce the view held by His Majesty's Government as to the object at which these negotiations should aim that the request was put forward whether His Majesty's Minister might not be supplied with a copy of Mgr. Robinson's report, which had been drawn up before the Vatican had launched its attack on Lord Strickland last July. The Vatican would have been fully justified in declining to do so on the ground that the report was a confidential document, in which case the request might have been made that the Vatican should, at any rate, submit to His Majesty's Government the conclusions which Mgr. Robinson had no doubt submitted, in order that His Majesty's Government might see whether they formed a suitable basis for discussion. As a matter of fact, Cardinal Gasparri agreed forthwith to communicate the text of Mgr. Robinson's report, but this has not been done. Instead, His Majesty's Minister was given the *pro-memoriâ* to which he took exception.

His Majesty's Government are unable to consider the *pro-memoriâ* as constituting a basis for, or even a contribution to, the forthcoming negotiations, and, protest once more against the presentation of such accusations against Lord Strickland which, quite regardless of whether they can or cannot be substantiated, serve no useful purpose and only tend to divert attention from the main issue. The view held by His Majesty's Government is that the primary and essential object of the forthcoming negotiations is the exclusion of the Maltese priesthood from local politics and only incidentally, as part of the major question, the examination of the accusations which the Vatican has made against Lord Strickland.

British Legation to the Holy See,
Rome, March 13, 1930.

No. 28.

Mr. A. Henderson to Mr. Chilton.

(Telegram.) *Foreign Office, March* 26, 1930.

The Vatican having refused to issue instructions to the Maltese clergy and to negotiate a concordat so long as Lord Strickland holds office, the Governor of Malta has been instructed to inform Lord Strickland that, in the circumstances, his undertaking may be considered to have lapsed. His Majesty's Government are all the more inclined to this course in view of the resolution, tabled for the 28th March by Bonnici, one of the recently appointed Clerical Senators, which condemns the conduct of the Maltese Government as being harmful to the spiritual interests of the Maltese people and as tending to weaken the respect of the ecclesiastical authority.

In informing the Cardinal Secretary of State of this pending debate you should add that the Vatican's rejection of the proposed truce releases Lord Strickland from his undertaking, and that, in the circumstances, no responsibility can be accepted by His Majesty's Government for any utterances which may be made by or on behalf of the Maltese Government.

No. 29.

Statement handed to the Cardinal Secretary of State by Mr. Chilton on April 10, 1930.

His Majesty's Government have learnt with considerable surprise and regret through His Majesty's Minister accredited to the Holy See, that the Vatican refuse to co-operate with them for the purpose of endeavouring to reach a settlement on the question of the relations between Church and State in Malta.

His Majesty's Government have given indisputable proofs of their desire to reach an amicable solution of the present difficulties as instanced by the fact that they recently secured from the head of the Maltese Ministry a formal undertaking, given on his own behalf and on that of all his political supporters, that no further polemics with the ecclesiastical authorities should take place during the course of the forthcoming electoral campaign. This undertaking, for which His Majesty's Government assumed full responsibility, was officially communicated to the Vatican by His Majesty's Minister on the 7th March. In making this communication, His Majesty's Minister also requested the Vatican, in the interests of peace and goodwill, to enter into a reciprocal undertaking on behalf of the Maltese clergy. His Majesty's Government considered such a step as well calculated to improve the general atmosphere in Malta, to produce calm, and to lead to better relations between Church and State. They were accordingly surprised at the Vatican's refusal to give such reciprocal undertaking; a refusal which reluctantly leads them to doubt the Vatican's desire to improve the general situation in the island. Furthermore, His Majesty's Government cannot refrain from considering as a discourtesy to themselves the action of the Vatican in expressing distrust of an undertaking given to them by the head of the Maltese Ministry and sponsored by themselves. This action is all the more inexplicable in that the Vatican themselves originally made a suggestion on these lines in their *pro-memoriâ* of the 13th October, 1929.*

His Majesty's Government, moreover, regret still more that the Vatican should now have expressed their intention of reversing the policy which they previously agreed with His Majesty's Government to pursue. In their statement, communicated by His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires to the Vatican on the 5th October, 1929, His Majesty's Government invited the Vatican to initiate negotiations through the diplomatic channel with a view to putting an end to the

* No. 15, page 39.

present strained relations between Church and State. This invitation was accepted by the Vatican without qualification of any kind in their *pro-memoriâ* of the 13th October, and, further, on the 20th December, Cardinal Gasparri, in conversation with His Majesty's Minister, promised to put forward certain suggestions as a basis for these negotiations. Since then, this promise has been more than once renewed, and His Majesty's Government considered themselves fully entitled to assume that the Vatican would, in all good faith, endeavour to reach a satisfactory settlement.

The complete change of attitude on the part of the Vatican at a moment when His Majesty's Government had every reason to suppose that they could count on the Holy See's close co-operation, renders any continuation of the present discussions useless. His Majesty's Government feel compelled, however, to place on record that they cannot accept any responsibility for any regrettable controversies in Malta which may result from the Holy See's determination not to exercise any restraining influence on the Maltese clergy; nor will they, in future, be able to listen to any complaints which may be made by the Vatican against the civil administration in the island.

British Legation to the Holy See,
Rome, April 10, 1930.

No. 30.

Sir J. Du Cane to Lord Passfield.

(Extract.) *The Palace,*
My Lord, *Valletta, April* 26, 1930.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that on my return from leave on the 20th instant I found that during my absence the archbishop had been summoned to Rome. He left Malta on the 13th and returned on the 19th April.

2. On his return he was welcomed by a large crowd, and in response to its acclamations he made a short address in which he stated that he brought from His Holiness the Pope a message of peace to the people of Malta. He added that the people might cry "Viva!" (Long live!) to whom they liked, but they should not cry "Abbasso!" (Down with!) to anybody.

This statement was welcomed as an indication that the Vatican had instructed the archbishop to adopt a conciliatory attitude during the elections. Very shortly, however, Ministers received information that the political campaign of the clergy was being accentuated, particularly in Gozo.

3. It was stated that many cases had occurred in which priests had asked penitents in the Confessional whether they intended to vote for the Constitutional party, and if the answer was in the affirmative had refused them absolution. The Commissioner of Gozo, a responsible civil servant, reported that this had happened to himself.

Sir Augustus Bartolo states that recently his confessor, a Franciscan monk, refused to hear his confession and stated that he did so on account of orders from his superior, the notorious Father Carta.

The parish priest of the village Casal Attard wrote a few days ago to Lady Strickland that on account of instructions from higher authority he could not bless the Villa Bologna, Lord Strickland's residence, in accordance with invariable custom at Easter.

4. Ministers brought this state of affairs to my notice yesterday and stated their opinion that the clergy were using undue influence on the electors, particularly with reference to the Confessional, contrary to the Electoral Law, which provides the penalty of imprisonment for such an offence. They added, however, that in their opinion the Church was trying to provoke them to retaliation, which in turn would justify the excommunication of Ministers.

I have, &c.
J. P. DU CANE, *Governor.*

No. 31.

Sir J. Du Cane to Lord Passfield.

(Extract.) *The Palace,*
My Lord, *Valletta, May* 2, 1930.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that, in consequence of reports of the activities of the Bishop of Gozo in connexion with the election, two Ministers, Sir Augustus Bartolo and Mr. R. E. Hamilton, visited Gozo during last week end in order to investigate the situation in that island.

They collected abundant evidence that the bishop had instructed the priests of his diocese to preach against the Constitutional party and to refuse absolution to its supporters, and that these instructions had been followed on an extensive scale. They rendered a report to me supported by a number of sworn statements. [A copy of these documents is enclosed herein.]

2. This morning the archbishop and the Bishop of Gozo issued a pastoral letter, a copy of which is enclosed. This letter has been posted in all the churches in both islands.

Ministers at once reported to me that the people had become dangerously excited as a result of this direct intervention of the bishops, and recommended that in view of the inadequacy and unreliability of the police all public meetings should be prohibited. I have had an interview with the chief of police, who confirms the view of Ministers that there is a risk of grave disorder, possibly accompanied by loss of life, if further meetings are allowed to take

place. Steps are, therefore, being taken to prohibit for the time being further public meetings in connexion with the elections by the refusal of permits by the police.

I have, &c.

J. P. DU CANE, *Governor.*

Enclosure 1 in No. 31.

Report by the Minister for Education.

My Lord, *Valletta, April* 30, 1930.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following report as the result of the investigation which, together with the Hon. R. E. Hamilton, Minister for Posts and Labour, I carried out at Gozo with regard to allegations of extensive exploitation of religion in that island, principally through the pulpit and the Confessional, for conducting a relentless campaign against the Government and securing its defeat at the forthcoming general elections.

2. In order to have a complete statement of the question it is deemed expedient to give a brief outline of the circumstances which led up to the investigation above mentioned.

3. I would therefore briefly recall that at a conference held on the 25th instant, Ministers submitted to his Excellency the Governor that the situation in Malta and Gozo had become so abnormal as to render necessary further representations to the Vatican on the part of His Majesty's Government.

4. His Excellency informed Ministers:—

(*a*) That the Vatican had refused to entertain the proposals submitted to it through the diplomatic channel.

(*b*) That the Imperial Government had sent a strongly worded note to the Vatican bringing the discussions to an end for the time being.

(*c*) That consequently His Majesty's Government could not entertain the proposal submitted in a memorandum by the Minister for Education and endorsed by Ministers that, during his recent visit to Rome, his Excellency should be charged with a special mission as Minister Plenipotentiary on the precedents of the mission of Sir Frederick Hankey in 1827 and of Sir Lintorn A. Simmons in 1889.

(*d*) That his Excellency had learned in Rome that Cardinal Pacelli had said that there was no reason to apprehend that the bishops and clergy of both islands would assume at the next general elections an attitude different from the one they had taken up at the last elections.

(*e*) That if the situation was really so abnormal as Ministers represented it to be, it might furnish sufficient grounds for further representations through the diplomatic channel.

(*f*) That isolated instances of the character mentioned by Ministers, viz., of pressure from the pulpit and the confessional under threats or penalties of a spiritual nature—would not constitute the abnormal situation indicated in (*e*).

(*g*) That evidence was therefore required to substantiate the statement of Ministers in support of any advice they might now or later wish to tender to his Excellency.

5. It was in these circumstances that, with the authority of the Cabinet, I proceeded to Gozo together with Mr. Hamilton, and at once started investigating the reports which Ministers had communicated to his Excellency.

6. Our task was simplicity itself. The traditional reticence which is characteristic of the Gozitans, especially in religious matters, was for once set aside, and all classes and conditions of people came forward to volunteer statements substantiating the submissions made by Ministers to his Excellency. This fact is symptomatic of the reaction produced upon the mass of the people by the political campaign against the Government carried on in the name and by means of religion.

7. By Saturday night we had taken down in the presence of witnesses a large number of statements which are annexed hereto and we were preparing to hear on the following days other witnesses amongst the hundreds who had volunteered to give their evidence when an important circumstance arose which rendered superfluous any further investigation.

8. It was, in fact, reported to us from several sources that there were grounds for anticipating that the following morning (Sunday, the 27th April) the parish priests throughout the diocese would announce from the altar a general order from the bishop to all confessors in Gozo to refuse absolution to all constitutional electors, voters, supporters and sympathisers, men, women and children.

9. I accordingly instructed the superintendent of police to detail a reliable police official in every parish to attend the Mass at which official announcements are generally made (which is an early Mass at which the Gospel is explained) to pay close attention to any pronouncement that might be made by the parish priests and to write it down at once. I also made arrangements for two or more trustworthy inhabitants from each parish to do the same.

10. At an early hour in the following morning and later during the day reports came in from our supporters, confirmed by the official reports of the police, that in nearly all the parishes that morning the parish priests had announced that this bishop had given strict orders that no one siding with the Government party was to be given absolution. Most of the parish priests had also added an injunction to the people, "for the good of their souls," not to attend, or even go near, the political meeting of the Constitutional party and the opening of their new club which were

to take place that morning, and also to keep away from the horse races which had been organised for the afternoon to celebrate the occasion.

11. The evidence which we had set out to collect, viz., that the state of affairs which we had reported to his Excellency was not confined to isolated cases but was general throughout Gozo—was thus afforded to us in the most ample, official, and authoritative manner by the action of the bishop himself.

12. In these circumstances, we refrained from accepting any more statements on the principal subject of our investigation and only received a few more which presented some special features.

13. The statements annexed to this submission speak for themselves. But it might not be amiss for me to set down some of the conclusions to be drawn therefrom together with some other facts gathered from a large number of persons whose statements we did not take down.

14. There is no doubt that until about three weeks ago, whether under "superior orders" or not, only a section of the clergy of Gozo refused to absolve, or indeed to hear the confession of, Constitutional sympathisers. In support of this statement it is sufficient to compare, *inter alia*, the statements of Mr. Tonna Barthet, the Commissioner of Gozo, and Mrs. F. S. Mifsud. (Nos. 1 and 2.)

15. There is also conclusive evidence that no general order had been issued up to the beginning of Holy Week.

16. It would appear from the evidence that there is ground for the belief, which we found to be very widespread, that the order became general, or at all events the report that it had been issued was generally spread, after the papers, especially vernacular ones, had published the news that the Archbishop of Malta on Easter Sunday publicly stated that His Holiness the Pope had blessed the whole people and desired peace in the island. It is indeed significant that the announcement above mentioned made by the parish priests of Gozo last Sunday (the 27th April) was prefaced by an emphatic denial of the messages of His Holiness and in several parishes followed by vigorous denunciation of the Government.

17. It is also the general belief in Gozo that the bishop waited for the issue of the writ for the general elections before definitely committing himself to the measures under report owing to widespread rumours that it was the intention of the Government to suspend the elections in view of the situation arising out of the religious dispute.

18. There are various obvious comments which one would be fully justified in offering on the action of the bishop and on other circumstances emerging from the statements of the witnesses we

have heard; but I will confine myself to pointing out one important fact only, viz., that there has not been, for a long time, any develop- in the unfortunate dispute with the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities in Malta, and therefore nothing to call for any new measures on the part of the Bishop of Gozo.

19. Another important circumstance which I cannot omit mentioning is that the polling days according to the normal terms established by law will fall within the period fixed by the Church for the performance of the Easter duties, *i.e.*, the receiving of Holy Communion; and the Gozitans perhaps even to a greater extent than the Maltese consider it an indelible strain on their character to be deprived of the Sacraments at this holy period, and those who are so deprived are looked upon and treated as outcasts by the rest of the community. The weight of this submission is not detracted from the fact which emerges from the evidence that hundreds of constitutionals, including women and young people, have chosen to go without the Sacrament because they felt that they could not change their party, for, on the other hand, it is not possible to say how many more have yielded to the pressure of the clergy which, in any Catholic country, and under any circumstances, but more so in an island like Gozo, and under the present conditions, constitutes the very gravest spiritual and moral pressure that it is possible to conceive and the most serious attack, by spiritual means, against the constituted authority of one of His Majesty's self-governing countries.

A. BARTOLO,
Minister for Education.

(1.)

Office of the Commissioner,
Gozo, April 26, 1930.

I, the undersigned, do hereby declare as follows :—

On the 23rd April, 1930, at 9·30 P.M., I went to Father Egidio Vella of the Minor Conventuals for confession.

When I had finished, confessor told me that he had received orders to refuse absolution to Stricklanders and those who intended to vote for Strickland. He then asked me whether I was a Strick-lander and whether I intended to vote for Strickland.

I said : I came to you to confess my sins and I think you have no right to question me about matters which do not concern you as a confessor.

He replied : I must obey orders.

I agreed. I then declared that I sympathised with the Strick-land party and that I intended to vote for him.

Thereupon I was refused absolution.

Immediately after I repeated my confession to Rev. Antonio Vella, one of the chaplains of the Victoria Hospital and Ospizio, who gave me absolution without referring to politics.

A. TONNA-BARTHET,
Commissioner for Gozo.

(2.)

I, Maria Dolores Mifsud, wife of Mr. F. S. Mifsud, daughter of Mr. (late) Gioacchino Le Brun, born in Valetta and residing at 12A, Piazza S. Agostino, Victoria, Gozo, do hereby declare that—

I am a daily communicant and performed my Easter duties on Wednesday following the Palm Sunday.

On the 24th April, in the afternoon, wishing to go to confession again, and my Father Confessor being away from the island, I approached the Rev. Antonio Vella, Chaplain of the Government Hospital.

The reason why I chose to go to him was because I had heard that he had absolved Mr. Alf. Tonna-Barthet, the Government Commissioner for Gozo, after he had been refused absolution by the Franciscan Friars.

On accosting the Rev. Vella at the hospital and asking him to hear my confession, he said he was sorry but it was no use because he had been ordered to deny absolution to Constitutionals, and he had had his jurisdiction in the matter withdrawn from him the previous evening.

(3.)

Police Sub-Inspector Michael A. Borg, stationed in Gozo, states :—

I have been stationed in Gozo for the last ten years. In the afternoon of Friday, the 25th instant, I went to the Church of St. Francis in Victoria to confess in preparation for the Easter Communion. There was Fr. Egidio Vella at the time, and, as we have known each other very well for a long time, I accosted him for the purpose. After I had finished my confession he said to me : "Now I am bound to ask you, in fulfilment of orders I have received from the Church authorities, what party you belong to, and if you side with Strickland's and do not change your opinion I cannot give you absolution." I replied : "I am a police officer, and as such have no party and cannot express political opinions. These matters are purely temporal and have nothing to do with spiritual affairs. I am quite convinced I am not obliged to express myself even here, and I therefore refuse to reveal to which party I propose to give my vote at the next election," He replied : "I am exceedingly sorry, but my orders are precise and preclude me from absolving you. If you change your opinion come back." I said : "This is not a matter of opinion. I will come only if there are orders to the contrary. I have come to do my duty as a Catholic, and I do not propose to do anything further in the circumstances." As a consequence I have been unable to perform my Easter duties.

(4.)

Michele Farrugia, son of the late Francesco, born at Casal Caccia, Gozo, and residing at No. 14, Via Casal Sannat, Victoria, Gozo, states :—

I am a retired schoolmaster, having been pensioned from the Government Elementary Schools Department three years ago for reasons of health, after thirty-two years' service. I am 52 years of age. I have been a member of the Third Order of St. Francis attached to the Capuchin Church at Victoria for the last twelve years. On or about the 10th instant, after we "Tertiaries" had gone to the vestry after Holy Communion, our rector, Fr. Leonardo, came in and said to us: "See that you all come again this evening as there is something important that I must tell you. There are some of us we must think of. Now we must be either with God or with the Devil." I did not go to the evening meeting. Four days later I was told by our lay minister, Giuseppe Scicluna, that the rector wanted to see me. On the following Sunday I asked Mr. E. A. Mifsud, L.P., to accompany me to the Capuchin Church where I intended to confer with the rector. I left Mr. Armando Mifsud in the church and I approached the rector, Fr. Leonardo, who was sitting on the peristile of the church chatting with about eight Nationalists. I asked him: "Is there anything you want to tell me please?" He asked: "Have you got anyone waiting for you?" I said: "No." He then took me to the yard and asked me: "Is it true that you are standing as a Constitutional candidate for the next election?" I replied in the affirmative, but said that I had not yet definitely promised to do so. He then said: "You must give up the Order, as the other Stricklanders will have to do (it had been stated in public houses that five Constitutionals had to be expunged from the list of members). I replied: "I will not resign, but, if you so think, dismiss me yourself and state in writing the reason for such dismissal, adding whether you have ever found me wanting in religious duties." At this point Mr. Mifsud arrived in time to hear me say those words.

As soon as he saw Mr. Mifsud he became furious and began to scream like a madman: "This is not a question of writing, this is our own affair, you have come here to lay a trap for me." I said that I wanted a written statement for my own justification and for the satisfaction of others, and I called Mr. Mifsud to witness what we were saying. But Father Leonardo rushed away and on Mr. Mifsud's suggestion I did not follow him as Mr. Mifsud had informed me that he had heard everything.

During Holy Week I naturally became eager to know what, if any, decision had been taken in my regard and whether I was to take part in the usual ceremonies. I looked in vain for Fr. Leonardo everywhere, but I found the lay Minister (Giuseppe Scicluna) on Holy Thursday morning, and in reply to my question he said that I had not yet been struck off the rolls, but they intended

doing so and that, therefore, I was not to take part in that evening's function. I followed his advice. That same evening, as I was watching the procession pass by, one of the brethren asked me in passing "Why didn't you join us?" I sarcastically replied: "Because I would disgrace you." On the Monday preceding Palm Sunday in the morning I went to the house of Mons. Fortunato Grech, my ordinary confessor, to visit his mother who was ill, as I am a friend of the family. After I left the house he went to the Cathedral where, I was afterwards informed, he was severely rebuked by his fellow Canons for having received me in his house. At noon of that same day he sent his domestic servant to ask me, in his name, to be good enough to cease frequenting his house.

In view of these occurrences I wrote to him on the Friday preceding Palm Sunday to ask him whether, if I went to confess to him, he would absolve me. He replied, in Maltese, in a short letter which I produce and of which the following is a translation :—

Dear Friend,

I have not had the courage to tell you, but I am under orders, as you have presented yourself as a candidate, to "defer" absolution.

In sending you my best compliments and wishing you a happy Easter, I subscribe myself,

Your faithful servant and friend,

Mons. Fort. Grech.

On the impulse of the moment I wrote a reply on the same letter saying that I would never change my political opinion, even were I to meet a sudden death, but on second thoughts I did not send the letter back with this reply written upon it. On Good Friday evening I went to his house and said to him: "I might have gone to another priest and got absolution. But I have not done so, and will not do so, because you are my confessor and I have nothing on my conscience. I will therefore wait until you send for me." I spoke to him in this manner because I had ascertained that the order was not general then, but had been given only to my confessor and to the Archpriest of Caccia, my parish, and was based only on the fact that I was standing as a Constitutional candidate. The Archpriest of Caccia subsequently sent for me and tried hard to persuade me to withdraw my candidature, and as I refused he said he could not let me perform my Easter duties without the authority of the bishop. So far such authority does not seem to have been forthcoming, as I am still precluded from absolution and communion.

(5.)

I, Giuseppe Bondi, doctor of laws of the University of Malta, practising barrister in the Gozo Courts, son of the late Giuseppe, born and residing in Victoria, Gozo, hereby declare and state as follows :—

As has been my custom for several years past, I am at present performing the devotion commonly known as "The Fifteen

Saturdays" in preparation for the celebration of the annual festival of Our Lady of Pompei on the 8th May. Accordingly, this morning (Saturday, the 26th April) I went to St. Francis Church, here at Victoria, and as I have not a standing confessor but go to confession to any priest who happens to be in church at the time, I accosted Father Mariano Xerri of the Franciscans and asked him to receive my confession. As soon as I knelt down, he said to me: "Excuse me, advocate, but we have received orders to put this question to the penitents before they start their confession: 'What party do you belong to?'" I replied: "I side with the Constitutionals or Strickland's party." He said: "I am very sorry, but in these circumstances we have orders to refuse absolution, so it is no use your confessing." I remarked: "Am I to understand then, that if I simply said that I would change my party you would absolve me?" He replied: "I understand what you mean; no, it is not enough to say so, but you must promise and do so." In these circumstances I told him that I would withdraw, which I did. I had already performed my Easter duties, but have had to give up the continuation of the "Fifteen Saturdays."

GIUSEPPE BONDI.

(6.)

Spiridione Borg, son of Sub-Inspector M. A. Borg, aged 21 years, born at Malta, and residing at 77, Piazza S. Francesco, Victoria, Gozo, timekeeper in the Public Works Department, states:—

On Friday last in the evening, the 25th instant, I went to confession to Father Egidio Vella, of the Franciscans, in the Franciscan Church.

Before I started my confession he asked me which party I sided with, and, on my replying that I was a Constitutional, he refused to hear my confession, saying that those were his orders.

The result has been that I am unable to fulfil my Easter duties.

(7.)

Luigi Gauci, nicknamed "ta Mejnech," aged 19, son of the late Paolo, born at Victoria, where he resides at No. 41 Via Casal Garbo, farm labourer, states:—

Yesterday (Saturday, the 26th April) I went to confession to the Rev. Michael Vella in preparation for my Easter duties.

He asked me to what party I belonged and, on my replying that I was a Stricklander, he warned me that I incurred mortal sin. I entered into a heated discussion with him, but he replied that he had to obey superior orders. On my remarking that I was not even an elector as I was under age, he said "it does not matter, as the order is general and applies even to women and children."

I further remarked: "If we are not to side with Strickland's party, whom are we to support—the perjurers ('il halliefa foloz')?"

He said: "Do you mean to say that the Mizzians are perjurers?"

I replied: "If not they themselves, they cause others to be perjurers." He remarked: "If you are referring to Terinu you are quite wrong. They have now found another witness, a police constable, who corroborates Terinu."

He pressed me to change my mind, which I refused to do, whereupon he told me it was no use confessing at all, and I withdrew.

(8.)

Witness states further that he has heard from his brother, aged 17, Giovanni by name, that the same thing happened to him yesterday when he went to confession to Father Crispino of the Capuchins.

(9.)

————, residing at Victoria, states:—

Some two or three weeks ago, on a Sunday afternoon, I attended at Garbo the last sermon of the Lenten Spiritual Exercises. The sermon took the shape of what is commonly called a "disputa," or a dialogue between two preachers, one posing as a pupil asking questions and the other as the teacher replying. The following were some of the questions and answers:—

Q. "Some people mean to go away during the election so as not to vote. Is that a right thing to do?"

A. "No. That is very wrong indeed. Who amongst you would suffer to stand by with folded arms whilst your father or mother is being slapped in the face? No, my children, you must all vote, and vote in such a manner as to destroy our enemies and protect your Holy Mother Church."

Q. "What about the cause of those who are working under this Government or might lose their situation as a consequence of their voting against the Government party. Are they not justified in giving their vote to the Ministerialists?"

A. "No, my son, we must first look after the soul and then the body. For the rest, the ballot is secret, the Assistant Commissioners are sworn to secrecy, if you can write you fill in the form yourselves and no one will know how you vote." He added: "Why should those who want work go to the Government party agents (galoppini) and beg for it, whereas in the past it used to be allotted by the parish priests who know best the needs of the people?" Here he got excited to such an extent that he used a very vulgar and unprintable word.

He further added: "Now my children, when the election time comes round—and we hope it is not far off—see that you all gather round us and we will help you to vote properly, for we must defend our religion and fight our enemies to the bitter end and to our last drop of blood."

I then withdrew, and so did others whom I knew to belong to the Constitutional party.

I must add that during the sermon the senior priest also said: "You fathers and mothers ought to be ashamed of yourselves to allow your children to read 'Ix-Xemx,' 'Il Progress' and 'Ix-Xecchec.' If you want them to read good papers, which do not meddle with politics, give them 'Lehen is-Seuua,' which is published by the Archbishop's Curia."

(10.)

Carmelo Sillato, aged 19, "ta Sillatu" son of Carmelo, gardener, born in Malta and residing at 78, Piazza S. Francesco, Victoria, Gozo, states:—

Last Saturday I went to confession, in preparation for my Easter Communion, to Father Mariano of the Franciscans, who is my ordinary confessor. I had scarcely knelt down when he remarked: "To begin with, what is your political party?" I said: "Strickland's." He replied: "Then I cannot give you absolution; I have received orders to that effect these last two days." I remarked: "But I am not even an elector as I am still under age." He replied: "That does not matter; you can spoil others by praising Strickland." I then withdrew, remarking: "Well then I will never change and if you want me you can send for me. If you don't I will perform my Easter duties twice over next next year."

(11.)

I, Michael Farrugia, nicknamed Ta Mahmah, age 52, son of the late Michael Angelo, born in Xeuchia, Gozo, and residing in the same village, hereby declare:—

At 4·30 this morning (Saturday, the 26th April, 1930) before going to work, I went to Holy Mass, as I often do. Afterwards I accosted the priest who had celebrated the Mass, the Rev. Carmelo, known as "ta Picioulu," who is my ordinary confessor, and confessed in preparation for my Easter duties.

After he had heard my confession he asked me: "Are you an elector," and I said: "Yes." He then asked: "Whom do you mean to give your vote to?" I replied: "I have always given it to Strickland and I mean to do so again." He thereupon remarked: "In that case I cannot give you absolution; we have received orders to that effect from the Bishop." Then I asked: "If I vote for Mizzi, will you absolve me?" He said: "Yes," and I said I would vote for Mizzi, and thereupon he gave me absolution. I have to add that when he first told me that if I intended to vote for Strickland he would not absolve me, I remarked to him: "But, is this a matter of religion?" and he replied: "I cannot absolve you; those are the orders of the Bishop."

(12.)

Carmelo Cordina, nicknamed "Ta-Steifen," aged 55, son of the late Luigi, born at Victoria, Gozo, where he resides at No. 16, Via Casal Caccia, states :—

I am a pensioned police constable. I was pensioned out of the force after thirty years' service in the R.M. Artillery and the police force with certificates of "exemplary" conduct.

I am a frequent communicant. Some time ago I went to my ordinary confessor to Kercem, and on my telling him that I had criticised the conduct of priests in politics, he said: "I am very sorry I cannot absolve you as the Bishop has reserved absolution in these cases to himself."

On his suggestion I tried a confessor in Victoria, but with the same result. Accordingly, as the time for the performance of Easter duties was approaching, I went to Malta, confessed to a priest in Valletta, received absolution and Holy Communion, and afterwards I again went to confession in Gozo, and as I had no longer any reason to confess having criticised priests, I was absolved and received communion.

(13.)

Mariano Calleja, nicknamed "ta Angilca," aged 30, son of the late Antonio, born at Kercem, where he resides at No. 29, Strada Xiuxia, agriculturalist, states :—

About four weeks ago I went to Fr. Egidio of the Franciscans to confess, who told me that those who had taken part in the political lampoon in carnival could not be absolved. (The lampoon in question was purely political and was a skit on ex-judge Cremona, a Nationalist candidate for this district, and had not the slightest reference to religious matters.)

I therefore withdrew and the same evening I went to confession to Fr. Crispino of the Capuchins. He told me the same thing, and we went on arguing for an hour and a half. I told him that on the feast of St. Gregory, the bishop, after the procession, had stigmatised in the church of Kercem all of us who had organised that skit. I told him also that the bishop had sent for me to apologise to him for having on that occasion insulted priests, but had refused to go because I had not done anything of the sort and I was not able to carry on an argument with the bishop.

It was up to those, if any, who did insult priests to apologise.

He then asked me whether I was an elector and if so whom I intended to vote for. I replied I had the vote and meant to give it to Strickland. Here again we engaged in a long and heated argument in the course of which he enumerated all the works alleged to have been carried out by Mizzi's Government notwithstanding my protest that I was at confession and these things had nothing to do with confession.

He asked me why I sided with Strickland, and I replied that he was the benefactor of us lower classes. He started a tirade

against Strickland and said amongst other things that even a former Governor had called him a liar. I told him that these things did not concern the soul and what I wanted to know was whether it was a sin to vote for Strickland. "Of course it is," he said, and he went on to add that even the Bishop of Malta, Mons. Caruana, "who is English," and who was a partisan of his, and even went to his villa at tea parties, had now turned against him; and so had many priests of Gozo who had formerly supported him (and here he mentioned some names of Gozo priests). He finished by repeating that he had orders not to absolve me, but on my further remonstrating that political matters had nothing to do with religion he told me he would see the bishop and asked me to come back the following Sunday (Easter Sunday). This I did. In the interval on instructions from the said confessor (Fr. Crispino) I went to see the parish priest and I had another long argument with him, he insisting that I had insulted priests in carnival and I denying the charge. He said that in order to let me perform my Easter duties it was essential that I should repent and apologise and that he should proclaim from the altar that those who had put up the carnival lampoon were allowed to receive Communion because they had recanted and asked for forgiveness.

I strongly objected, again saying that I had nothing to recant or be sorry for with regard to carnival.

As for my sins of course I did repent, and that was why I went to confession, but there was no reason why this should be proclaimed from the Altar.

When I went to Fr. Crispino the second time (that is on Easter Sunday) he asked me whether I had seen the parish priest, and on my relating to him all that had taken place between us he asked me whether I would abide by his conditions. I emphatically refused, whereupon he said he would see the parish priest himself and bade me go back to him on the following Saturday (yesterday).

On the Friday (the 25th) the parish priest left at my house my "Easter Certificate" (bullettin) and the next (yesterday) evening I again went to Fr. Crispino, who without any further questioning or arguing heard my confession and gave me absolution; and this morning I received Holy Communion in my parish church in Kercem in fulfilment of my Easter duties.

Enclosure 2 in No. 31.

Joint Pastoral of the Bishops.

The following pastoral letter, signed by his Grace the Archbishop and his Lordship the Bishop of Gozo, dated the 27th April, was issued yesterday, the 1st May, and made public in all the churches :—

Dom Maurus Caruana, O.S.B., Archbishop, Bishop of Malta, and Mons. Michael Gonzi, Bishop of Gozo.

(Translation.)

Venerable Brethren and Beloved
Children in Jesus Christ,

We are on the eve of the political elections. The excitement of souls is already greater than ever before and all the good expect, very rightly, of us, who are placed by the Holy Ghost to rule these two eminently Catholic dioceses, a word of comfort and enlightenment in these times of anxiety and confusion.

The Church has never claimed to control purely political interests, which are the affair of the State; but when it is a question of safeguarding the religious and moral treasures of the people; when the interests of religion are threatened; when the hierarchy of the Church is treated with contempt and its authority tampered with; when, in a word, politics encroach on the altar and public order runs the risk of being subverted, then the Church has the right and the duty to intervene and to tell to all, kings and peoples, rulers and ruled, the truth, and to indicate as it must to all concerned, without distinction and at all costs, their own obligations. That if such dangers originate from those who hold in their hands the reins of government, or if they are to be feared from such as are preparing to assume the Government, then the Church turns to its faithful subjects, upon whose suffrage depends religious and social well-being, and reminds them of the obligation which has devolved on them to foster and to defend religion. This has always been the conduct of the Church throughout the long course of centuries; nor, by acting thus, has the Church acted politically, nor does it so act, though its detractors insinuate otherwise. The Church has one sole policy: that of the salvation of souls, the Glory of God, and her own honour; and this is not politics but pure religion, as the reigning Pontiff, Pius XI, had occasion to say in his address to the Maltese and Gozitan pilgrims last August.

And our pastoral conduct has always been inspired by the Catholic principles enunciated above. We have never obstructed the purely political activity of any political party; we have never sought to further any at the expense of others, as long as the various local political parties kept within the limits of politics, without invading the preserves of religion.

However, the actual circumstances obtaining in the country are very different. Anyone who has attentively and dispassionately examined the controversies which have arisen between the

ecclesiastical authorities and the local Government, as well as the causes, has been absolutely forced to admit—despite whatever may be said to the contrary—that the questions under notice regard religion. And did not His Holiness the Pope declare it in explicit terms in the letter sent to us, bishops of these islands, through the medium of Cardinal Gasparri on the 30th June last? The Pope, knowing full well from the reports of Mgr. the Apostolic Delegate the gravity of the situation, comforted us and exhorted us bishops to continue with due firmness, and not without the necessary prudence, in the line of conduct pursued by us till then against the attitude of certain authorities in the Ministry, and spoke of the extremely harmful activity against religion and against the most sacred Catholic traditions of our country on the part of these authorities, inviting the faithful of these islands to intensify their prayers in order to obtain from Heaven the betterment of the painful situation, and invoking the cessation of such harm by the responsible authorities. These last, however, far from submitting to the paternal word of the Pope and obeying—as was meet in those who conducted the Government of an eminently Catholic people—dared to dispute the august word of the Vicar of Jesus Christ and rebel, to the grave scandal of the good and to the prejudice of the Catholic discipline of our good people. We, pastors of these dioceses, have not kept silent in the face of this attitude of the ministerial authorities and of those who supported them; we have raised a protesting voice against such scandal with all the energy and with all the dignity of the episcopal character, with which Divine Providence has been pleased to invest us, at the same time urging those responsible and their followers to repentance and filial submission to the Father of all Catholics. But our words fell upon barren ground. We have repeated our offers of peace, but we have again insisted upon public and unmistakable signs of repentance. Nor could we do otherwise; the scandal was public and hence the reparation should be public; order publicly violated must be publicly restored. Peace could not be dissociated from justice. And the state of rebellion against the word of the Pope still persisted—we regret to have to say it—on the part of the Government of Catholic Malta.

In view of such a painful state of affairs, in the sad times through which we are passing we have not been able to refrain from addressing to you, venerable brethren and beloved children who glory, as in your greatest glory, in belonging to the Catholic Church, this our letter to strengthen the good, to spur the indolent, to enlighten the erring, to warn those who act in bad faith. Our word has hitherto been and will still be free and frank, as is designed for such as have received from God the mission of enlightening souls. It will, perhaps, not be pleasing to all, but the fault is not ours. It is always a serious matter to tell a bitter truth, but how much better is a truth which saddens than a lie which deceives. Deceit leaves ruin in its wake; truth is constant and saving. And we have always told you the truth and shall tell it to you at all costs by reason of the duty we have of

enlightening you and of the love which we feel towards you. Nothing shall shut our mouths.

In the existing circumstances the exercise of the right to vote becomes a sacred duty of conscience and of responsibility. It is a binding obligation upon every one of you not to remain indifferent and weak spectators in the face of what we with profound sorrow declare to be happening in our midst. Lamentations and protests are not enough; action is needed. As good sons of the Church which was irrigated by the sweat of the brow of the Apostle Paul you must show by facts to the world, which is interested in our painful condition, that it is no light thing to scorn our centuries-old Catholic traditions, and that the sacrileges designed to alienate you from the Catholic spirit and discipline are of no avail but to bring you yet closer thereto and to unite you to him who has received from God the mission to be your guide to salvation, to be always with your bishops, with the Pope, in the Church, with Christ. Show by facts that, when it is a matter of fidelity to the Holy See and the Pope of Rome, you are, like your fathers, invulnerable. This is for you an extremely grave obligation in conscience to which you cannot for any reason in the world shut your eyes and ignore. He who with his vote helps tendencies or men from whom he cannot safely expect a staunch defence of the interests of religion and conscientious Christian endeavour in the State and in society, does not act as a Catholic.

And to come to the concrete, and in order not to leave in your souls any indecision. Know, therefore, as Catholics:—

(1) You may not, without committing a grave sin, vote for Lord Strickland and his candidates, or for all those, even of other parties, who in the past have helped and supported him in his fight against the rights and the discipline of the Church, or who propose to help and support him in the coming elections.

(2) For even stronger reasons you may not present yourselves as candidates in the electoral lists proposed by Lord Strickland or by other parties who propose to support him in the coming election.

(3) You are also solemnly bound in conscience in the present circumstances to take part in the elections and to vote for those persons who, by their attitude in the past, offer greater guarantee both for religious welfare and for social welfare.

In order, then, to prevent abuses in the administration and reception of the Sacraments, we remind our priests that they are strictly forbidden to administer the Sacraments to the obstinate who refuse to obey these our instructions. It pains us greatly to see Catholics guilty of public and grave violation of Catholic discipline, continue freely to approach the Sacraments to the great wonder of the good. It is time that those responsible performed

their duty with firmness and without human respect, if they do not wish to draw down the wrath of the Divine Judge.

We exhort you again, and we do it with all our paternal heart, to preserve calm, to observe public order and tranquillity and never to have recourse to violence or provocation.

We recommend all, clergy and people, to raise together with us a fervent prayer to God and to the Sainted Protectors of these dioceses, committing into their hands the fate of our country. To this end we order that from the reception of this present until further orders, in all the churches before Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament there be recited five *Pater, Ave* and *Gloria*, followed by *Veni Creator* with the Orations, "*Deus qui corda,*" "*Concede*" and "*Deus, qui multitudinem gentium.*"

We wish finally that this our pastoral letter be made public to the faithful in all the churches on Thursday next, the first day of the month dedicated to the Virgin Mary, our Mother. And, in the belief that the Good Shepherd through the intercession of His and our Mother, will vouchsafe to hear our prayers and concede to us the religious and social peace for which we long, we bless you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

† MAURUS, O.S.B.,
Archbishop Bishop of Malta.
† MICHAEL,
Bishop of Gozo.

No. 32.

Sir J. Du Cane to Lord Passfield.

(Telegram.) *May* 3, 1930.

Privy Council has considered question of postponement of election by ordinance, and was unanimously of opinion that if election were not postponed there were real grounds for anticipating disturbances. I have therefore decided to issue an ordinance staying all stages of election until date to be fixed by me, and I have explained to Ministers that election will be held without regard to political advantage of either party at the earliest possible date consistent with public safety. It is too soon to gauge time that must elapse before it is possible to proceed with election, but much will depend upon attitude adopted by the bishops.

No. 33.

Pro-memoriâ handed to Mr. Chilton by the Cardinal Secretary of State on May 7, 1930.

(Translation.) *Vatican, May 7, 1930.*

It is not without surprise that the Holy See has taken note of what is set forth in the *pro-memoriâ* of His Britannic Majesty's Government of the 10th April.*

According to what is stated there the Holy See would refuse to co-operate with His Majesty's Government to arrive at an understanding regarding the relations between Church and State in Malta and a friendly solution of the present difficulties. In support of these grave affirmations His Majesty's Government present the two following arguments:—

(*a*) His Majesty's Government, according to the *pro-memoriâ*, were able to obtain from Lord Strickland a formal promise in his own name and from all his supporters that no polemic with the ecclesiastical authorities should take place during the electoral campaign; a promise for which His Majesty's Government assumed full responsibility, and which was communicated officially to the Holy See on the 7th March last by His Majesty's Minister, who, in turn, demanded that the Holy See should give a similar promise in the name of the Maltese clergy; but the Holy See has refused to enter into a mutual agreement of this kind.

(*b*) In the *pro-memoriâ* of the 5th October, 1929, His Majesty's Government invited the Vatican to initiate through the diplomatic channel negotiations with a view to putting an end to the present strained relations between Church and State in Malta. This invitation was accepted by the Vatican without any sort of restriction in the *pro-memoriâ* of the 13th October, 1929; then on the 20th December Cardinal Gasparri, in a conversation with His Majesty's Minister, promised to make other suggestions as a basis of these negotiations; now, however, the Vatican has expressed the intention of altering this line of conduct.

To such serious statements it is necessary to give an exhaustive reply.

But above all it is indispensable to rectify a misunderstanding, which the Holy See believes to be the reason for the present divergency of views between the Holy See and His Majesty's Government.

The Government holds that the root of the present difficulty in Malta lies in the participation of priests in local politics; but information, which has reached the Holy See and has been verified by most reliable witnesses, expressly sent thither, and especially by

* No. 29, page 65.

the Delegate Apostolic, have on the contrary made it clear that the real cause of the unsatisfactory conditions is the attitude of Lord Strickland, head of the Government, and of the Constitutional party; an attitude undoubtedly and consistently injurious to religion, since it discredits bishops and clergy, upsets ecclesiastical discipline and tends to destroy the religious traditions of a people so deeply attached to the Church. The harm done and the scandal caused are aggravated by the fact that Lord Strickland, while wishing to appear as a good Catholic, utilises in his campaign clerics who are in opposition to their legitimate superiors. Furthermore His Majesty's Government, to whom the character of Lord Strickland is well known by virtue of his activities in other parts of the world, cannot ignore his action with regard to religion in Malta, since although it is not easy to give full details of all the particulars, as it is carried out with great ability and under the guise of political aims, the Holy See, at the request of the British Minister, furnished a special memorandum on the 29th January last on this subject. Now His Majesty's Government, while they have not yet returned an answer with regard to the actions credited to Lord Strickland, have never for their part considered the question of defining precisely in the same manner to the Holy See their generic statements with regard to local priests, proving that they have been lacking in loyalty towards His Majesty's Government and the Constitution of Malta. Nor has it been ascertained that any anti-British tendencies, as far as Catholics are concerned, have developed as a result of these dissensions in Malta. The clerics and catholics of Malta are most faithful to the Imperial Crown, and if they are opposed to Lord Strickland it is solely because he is harming the Faith and their most sacred traditions. This is so far true that in the past the constitutional party has had the vote even from members of the clergy of one or another diocese, nor did the Holy See make any objection to that party until Lord Strickland invaded the field of religion. The Holy See, which most studiously keeps aloof from any religious party as well as from all local rivalries so far as regards material or merely civil interests, would certainly never have intervened in the Maltese question had they not seen that the interests, both religious and moral, of the clergy and people were clearly being harmed. The Holy See earnestly begs that note should be taken of this declaration, for the reason that it is necessary to enlighten public opinion on the true state of present affairs.

To continue—

(*a*) With regard to the pre-electoral truce, this is how events occurred according to the documents and notes in the archives kept by the Secretariat of State :—

In the *pro-memoriâ* of the 26th February last, His Majesty's Government requested that immediate and authoritative instructions should be given to the Maltese clergy for the period of the elections, without any reference to any promise or undertaking on the part of Lord Strickland. Only on the 7th March did the representative

of the British Government make the verbal communication of a promise which Lord Strickland had made to His Majesty's Government not to attack the clergy during the period of the elections.

Therefore: (1) There was a merely verbal communication of a promise made by Lord Strickland to the Government; (2) such promise was restricted to not attacking the clergy and not to the whole matter of his activities in the field of religion; (3) it was limited to the period of the electoral campaign, which left it to be inferred that after the elections Lord Strickland would be able to resume his activities injurious to religion; (4) nothing was said about the supporters of Lord Strickland and of his newspapers (organs so active on his behalf), so that it was by no means to be excluded that the attacks should not be continued by these papers even during the electoral period; (5) no mention was made of an efficacious guarantee on the part of His Majesty's Government, and much less was any indication given of the object of such a guarantee, *i.e.*, whether His Majesty's Government guaranteed the simple fact of Lord Strickland's promise or guaranteed the keeping of such a promise, and it would be difficult to understand how His Majesty's Government could give the latter since they had repeatedly declared that they had no power over Lord Strickland because "the Maltese Ministry rests on the support of legislature elected by popular franchise."

On the 14th March last the British Minister, in presenting a memorandum dated the 13th March, once more requested that instructions should be issued to the clergy, and again alluded verbally to the promise made by Lord Strickland. Therefore, this second communication of the Legation added nothing new to the state of the question.

In these circumstances, the words of the note of the 10th April last are not understood which speak of a formal engagement obtained from Lord Strickland and given in his own name and that of all his political supporters, an engagement for which His Majesty's Government assumed full responsibility and which had been officially communicated to the Vatican on the 7th March.

As a *quid pro quo* for the promise made by Lord Strickland, His Majesty's Government once more urged the above-mentioned request of the 26th February last, viz., that the Holy See should give speedy and authoritative instructions to the clergy of Malta to abstain from all active part in local politics, especially in view of the forthcoming electoral campaign, and not to put up ecclesiastics as candidates for the Legislative Assembly and to avoid controversies concerning the relations of Church and State, as well as criticisms against the negotiations for a concordat. This is not the place for considering the negotiations for a concordat, which have nothing to do with the pre-election truce. Moreover, it is well to recall the correct and dignified attitude maintained by the clergy of Malta in the last general elections of 1927, as Lord Strickland himself acknowledged to the Apostolic Delegate, Mgr. Robinson. Such correct and dignified attitude, therefore, was not what the Holy See was asked to enjoin on the Maltese clergy in the present electoral campaign.

This the Holy See could easily have done, nay, had already done in the letter of the 3rd June wherein to the bishops of Malta was expressed the confidence that they "should maintain due firmness but not divorced from the prudence which is necessary." What was asked as the *quid pro quo* for the above-mentioned promise of Lord Strickland was that the Holy See should forbid the clergy of Malta to take any active part in politics, more particularly during the time of the electoral campaign: in other words, the Holy See was asked to forbid the clergy of Malta (1) to put up ecclesiastics as candidates for the Legislative Assembly, thus depriving them of the right recognised as being theirs both by the Maltese Constitution and (with due limitations) by the codex of the Canon Law; and (2) to oppose the candidature of Lord Strickland.

Such are the terms of the proposed pre-election truce. Now it is clear that, had the Holy See accepted such a proposal, it would have favoured and in a way made certain Lord Strickland's electoral triumph, depriving the clergy of a right they possess. The result would have been that the anti-religious campaign would have continued even during the period of the elections, on the side of Lord Strickland's supporters, and in his newspapers and after the elections generally, with serious harm to the faith of the good Catholics in Malta. The Holy See trusts that His Majesty's Government, after the foregoing observations, will not hold to the rather ungracious and unjustified expressions contained in the memorandum of the 10th April, referred to above.

(*b*) Regarding the refusal of the Holy See to enter into negotiations with His Majesty's Government with the aim of restoring political and religious peace to the Island of Malta, which has been upset solely by the conduct of Lord Strickland and of his adherents, the Holy See declares yet once again that it would be happy to enter into discussions to that end and sincerely trusts that they would reach a happy issue; but the bar thereto is the person of Lord Strickland, on account of the harmful activity of himself and his followers. Furthermore, the memorandum of the British Government of the 10th April is not exact in asserting that the proposal of the Government to initiate diplomatic discussions had been already accepted by the Holy See without any kind of restriction. On the contrary, the proposal was received with the explicit reservation that the principal cause of the discord should be removed, viz., the attitude of Lord Strickland. This was expressly stated in the memoranda of the 10th August and the 13th October, 1929, in the latter of which the following words occur:—

> "As the first point in the discussions it is well to remember that the principal if not the sole cause of the religious disturbance in the Island of Malta had been the anti-clerical attitude of Lord Strickland from the moment of his arrival. Such being the case, we do not see how religious peace and tranquillity can be re-established while the causes of such disturbance remain."

His Majesty's Government, replying to the note of the 2nd July, 1929, in which the Holy See invited the said Government to take

such measures as they might judge necessary to stop the harmful activity of Lord Strickland and his party, wrote on the 5th August, 1929: "If their actions have been illegal, the ordinary remedies have been open to any persons who regard themselves as aggrieved. If they have been politically unwise or inexpedient, the remedy lies with the electorate." If that is so, it is hard to see how, without contradiction, concessions for the forthcoming elections favourable solely to Lord Strickland and his followers can be demanded from the Holy See and how the clergy could be forbidden to exercise in defence of their religion rights based on that selfsame electorate.

In view of what is above set forth, the Holy See trusts that His Majesty's Government will not press the points and the proposals so far made, and once more declares that no less than His Majesty's Government the Holy See earnestly desires that the serious dissension be settled and would furthermore be grateful to His Majesty's Government for an intimation of fresh bases for any such negotiations with that end in view, confident, as well as sincerely desirous, that thereby would be strengthened still more the friendly relations so happily existing between the Holy See and His Majesty's Government.

No. 34.

Statement handed to the Cardinal Secretary of State by Mr. Chilton on May 9, 1930.

In a memorandum dated the 10th April* His Majesty's Government stated their view that any continuation of the discussion of Maltese affairs with the Holy See was useless. Since then, however, they have learned of the following events in Malta which they cannot pass over in silence. It appears that on Sunday, the 27th April, all priests in Gozo announced in the churches that it would be a mortal sin to vote at the forthcoming elections for the Constitutional party, and that absolution would be refused to supporters of that party. On the 1st May the Archbishop of Malta and the Bishop of Gozo published a pastoral letter forbidding Catholics to vote for Lord Strickland's party, ordering them to vote for the Nationalist party, and ordering priests to refuse the Sacrament to persons who disobeyed their orders.

These acts seem in the highest degree reprehensible to His Majesty's Government who must protest against them in the most emphatic manner. To this protest they can only add a renewed expression of their regret that the Holy See has been unable to see its way either to countermand the directions issued by the Maltese hierarchy or to seek, in co-operation with His Majesty's Government, some means by which the interests of Church and State in Malta can be brought into lasting harmony. So far from this being the case, the Vatican's attitude in this matter has

* No. 29, page 65.

allowed the situation in Malta to develop in such a way that His Majesty's Government have felt compelled in order to prevent threatened disturbances to authorise the Governor to exercise his reserved powers under the Maltese Constitution and to suspend the elections in the island.

No. 35.

Statement handed to the Cardinal Secretary of State by Mr. Chilton on May 16, 1930.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have received from the Holy See a memorandum on Maltese affairs dated the 7th May* which reveals a wide divergence of view in regard to both the purport of the memoranda and conversations which have taken place during the last year, and the fundamental questions at issue between the Vatican and themselves. They do not think that this memorandum puts an accurate construction on their intentions and proposals, or that indeed in several passages it reflects correctly the upshot of the communications which have been exchanged between them and the Holy See. No useful purpose would, however, at this stage be served by submitting it to a detailed and controversial examination. The correspondence is about to be laid before Parliament, and they are content to leave judgment in the hands of Parliament and of public opinion.

Neither do His Majesty's Government consider that the secular controversy which surrounds the division of the spiritual from the temporal sphere can fruitfully be reopened. They hold and always have held that its place should be taken by the strictly practical arrangements which they have consistently desired and still desire to discuss and agree upon with the Holy See.

For this reason they cordially welcome the proposal that negotiations should be resumed; but they are obliged by recent events to make such resumption conditional upon orders being given by the Holy See to the episcopal authorities in Malta and Gozo which will restore to the electorate of the colony complete freedom to exercise their political judgment. His Majesty's Government earnestly trust that the Vatican will see its way by this means to demonstrate in a practical way its expressed desire—and it is a desire which they themselves heartily reciprocate—to strengthen the friendly relations happily existing between the two parties.

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* No. 33, page 84.

No. 36.

Pro-memoriâ handed to Mr. Chilton by the Cardinal Secretary of State on May 19, 1930.

(Translation.) *Vatican, May 19, 1930.*

THE undersigned, Cardinal Secretary of State of His Holiness, has the honour to acknowledge receipt of the note of the 9th instant* respecting the present situation in Malta.

In this note protests are made (*a*) against the priests of Gozo, and (*b*) against the pastoral letter of the Maltese bishops of the 1st May; (*c*) regret is expressed "because the Holy See has been unable to see its way either to countermand the directions issued by the Maltese hierarchy, or to seek in co-operation with His Majesty's Government some means by which the interests of the Church and State in Malta can be brought into lasting harmony"; in conclusion, (*d*) the Holy See is blamed for having permitted the situation in Malta to develop in such a way that His Majesty's Government have felt compelled, in order to prevent threatened disturbances, to authorise the Governor to suspend the elections.

Wishing to reply separately to each of these points, the undersigned Cardinal finds himself under the necessity of making the following comments:—

(*a*) With regard to the statement contained in the note that "on the 27th April *all* priests in Gozo announced in the churches that it would be a mortal sin to vote at the forthcoming elections for the *Constitutional party*," according to information received by the Holy See, the facts are as follows: While the bishops' pastoral was made public on the 1st May, *some* priests of the diocese of Gozo announced in church the preceding Sunday, the 27th April, that Catholics could not conscientiously vote for Lord Strickland and his partisans because they were enemies of religion; the aforesaid Bishop of Gozo complained of this untimely publication.

(*b*) The note adds that in the pastoral of the 1st May "the Archbishop of Malta and the Bishop of Gozo forbade Catholics to vote for Lord Strickland, and ordered them to vote for the Nationalist party." From a perusal of the pastoral in question it is clear that—

(1) The bishops do not mention the Constitutional party, although they openly mention Lord Strickland and his partisans by name in the struggle against the rights and discipline of the Church; from which it is evident that they do not condemn the *Constitutional party*, as far as their programme is concerned, but only refer to those persons who have been notoriously active in a manner harmful to religion.

(2) Likewise, the bishops in their pastoral do not even mention the Nationalist party, but confine themselves to declaring it a conscientious duty ("il dovere di coscienza"), which in view of

* No. 34, page 88.

the elections, renders it always and everywhere incumbent upon Catholics to vote for those, who, judging from their past life, offer guarantees for religious and social well-being. Matters being thus, the Holy See does not consider the protest of His Majesty's Government justified, both because it is based on inexactitudes ("elementi inesatti"), and because it deals with measures taken by the bishops in fulfilment of their sacred duties as pastors of souls, according to their own consciences, and which therefore can in no manner and to no one appear with any justice liable to reproof. With regard to this it may be opportune to repeat what we said in the *pro-memoriâ* of the 7th instant; *i.e.*, that the clergy and Catholics of Malta are most loyal to the Imperial Crown and that, if they are opposed to Lord Strickland it is not on grounds of party politics, but solely because his activities are injurious to the Faith and to their most sacred traditions; so much so is this true that in the past the Constitutional party obtained the vote of worthy members of the clergy of both dioceses. Moreover, the Holy See never raised any objection to the party in question as long as Lord Strickland did not intervene in religious matters.

(*c*) Nor is there better foundation for the regret which His Britannic Majesty's Government continue to express because the Holy See has not listened to the proposals of the Government in question, and has not sought, with mutual accord, means which permit of reaching lasting harmony between Church and State in Malta. The Holy See is confident that His Britannic Majesty's Government will already have modified their view on this point after having maturely considered the *pro-memoriâ* of the 7th instant, in which the Holy See itself, while explaining the serious reasons which obliged it not to accept the propositions of His Britannic Majesty's Government, again declared it to be their desire that the serious trouble in Malta should be settled as soon as possible, and expressed the belief that the above-mentioned Government would indicate fresh grounds for future negotiations.

The grounds for the judgment repeatedly expressed by the Holy See on the activities of Lord Strickland and his partisans have, moreover, received further confirmation in an event which has recently occurred; *i.e.*, from the confessional investigation, carried out personally at Gozo by the Ministers Bartolo and Hamilton, an enquiry which the Minister Bartolo has even published in the columns of the "Daily Malta Chronicle" of the 5th instant.* In the face of such a fact, as painful as it is seriously offensive to the Faith and to the conscience of the Maltese people, the Holy See cannot refrain from lifting its voice and protesting in the most emphatic manner.

(*d*) Your Excellency's note closes with the statement that "The Vatican's attitude in this matter has allowed the situation in Malta to develop in such a way that His Majesty's Government have felt compelled, in order to prevent threatened disturbances, to authorise the Governor to exercise his reserved power under the Maltese

* See Enclosure 1 in No. 31, page 68.

Constitution, and to suspend the elections in the island." In this regard the undersigned Cardinal is able to assure your Excellency that, according to information received by the Holy See from most authoritative quarters, there never has been any danger in Malta of disorder on the part of Catholics; especially as the bishops in their pastoral of the 1st May exhorted them "with all their paternal hearts to keep the peace, and to maintain order and public tranquillity, and never to resort to violence or provocation." If, on the other hand, there was a threat or danger of disorder, it cannot be seen in what manner the attitude of the Holy See can be held responsible. The Holy See is disposed always and everywhere to do all in its power so that public peace and tranquillity may be maintained and restored.

The undersigned avails, &c.

CARDINAL PACELLI.

No. 37.

Pro-memoriâ handed to Mr. Chilton by the Cardinal Secretary of State on May 20, 1930.

(Translation.)

IN reply to the pro-memoriâ of His Britannic Majesty's Government dated the 16th instant,* the Holy See considers it necessary to make the following observations, which will also help to clear up the whole question of the grievous Maltese conflict :—

1. The pro-memoriâ of the Holy See of the 7th instant,† to which that of His Britannic Majesty's Government under discussion is intended as a reply, was drawn up with every care in all its details based on the written documents and verbal communications of His Majesty's Legation. If His Majesty's Government have observations to oppose to the above-mentioned pro-memoriâ, it appears to be not only useful but essential that they propose them in detail with proofs and specific facts. In the present grievous conflict, which disturbs the peaceful population of Malta, the Holy See has on every occasion justified its criticisms with precise facts and documents. It greatly desires, therefore, similar action on the part of His Majesty's Government, being unable to rest content with generic and unproven assertions.

2. If His Majesty's Government propose to leave judgment to Parliament and to public opinion, they are making use of means which are not to the same extent at the disposal of the Holy See, and are putting the Holy See to the necessity of enlightening public opinion in any manner at its disposal and which it may consider proper ("conveniente").

3. As to the "secular controversy" between the spiritual and the temporal, the Catholic doctrine, from which the Holy See cannot withdraw ("prescindere") or depart—although always it is disposed to reach a practical accord compatible with the essential principles

* No. 35, page 89. † No. 33, page 84.

of that doctrine—is well known and constant. The Holy See has always held, and still holds, that the two complete societies, ecclesiastical and civil, are constituted by God Himself, nor have they ever denied nor wished to compromise in any manner the just rights of the State. And if they are always willing to enter into relations or come to agreements with various Governments they cannot alter the nature of these two societies, nor renounce the essential rights of the Church, just as the State would not renounce its own rights or would not accept an unjust curtailment thereof ("indebita menomazione").

4. In conforming with these principles the Holy See again declare themselves ready amicably to negotiate a means for a peaceful settlement of the Maltese question.

But as to the preceding condition which His Britannic Majesty's Government wish to impose, this the Holy See regret their inability to accept; because such action would imply an unjust condemnation and repudiation ("menomazione") of the bishops. We say unjust, because the bishops have acted according to their consciences as pastors in defence of the religious interests entrusted to them, of the common good and of the most sacred traditions of their people, who are so faithful to the Catholic Church. And it cannot be said that they have hindered the electors in the full liberty which the exercise of their political rights demands; they have rather wished to safeguard this liberty against the artifices of politicians considered by them and by their people to be adversaries of the Faith and of the public welfare, bearing in mind the moral laws to which that liberty should be subordinated, just as the exercise of any right whatever should be regulated by the concomitant order of duties.

If, therefore, through the unsatisfactory state of the dispute some unsatisfactory incident may occur, the Holy See are always ready to do all in their power to bring about an amelioration of affairs; it must be remembered, however, that the agitation of minds can never cease, passions will never be calmed nor a genuine peace assured so long as those who have disturbed that peace remain in power alienating from themselves the clergy and the people who have, up to the present, been so faithful and loyal to the British Crown, but also most tenacious of their Catholic Faith and of their ancient religious and civil traditions.

Vatican, May 20, 1930.

No. 38.

Statement handed to the Cardinal Secretary of State by Mr. Ogilvie-Forbes on May 30, 1930.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have read with disappointment the *pro-memoriâ* which the Holy See addressed to His Majesty's Minister on the 19th instant* in reply to the protest which Mr. Chilton was instructed to make in regard to the recent action taken by the Maltese clergy for the purpose of influencing the forthcoming Colonial elections.

2. His Majesty's Government take note of the fact that it was some and not all of the priests in Gozo who, on the 27th April, made the announcement to which exception is taken, and that in the pastoral of the 1st May the words "Nationalist party" and "Constitutional party" do not occur. These are, however, fine distinctions which do not in any way affect the case on which the protest of His Majesty's Government is based.

3. The Holy See refer to their *pro-memoriâ* of the 7th instant where they declared their desire that the serious difficulties in Malta should be settled as soon as possible, and expressed the belief that His Majesty's Government would indicate fresh grounds for further negotiations. In thus reverting to this statement the Holy See appear to have overlooked the note which was presented to them by Mr. Chilton on the 16th instant, in reply to the *pro-memoriâ* of the 7th May, in which it was pointed out that His Majesty's Government are obliged by the action of the Maltese clergy on the 27th April and the 1st May to make the resumption of negotiations conditional upon orders being given by the Holy See to the episcopal authorities of Malta and Gozo which would restore to the electorate of the colony complete freedom to exercise their political judgment. The Holy See, in their reply of the 20th instant,† have, much to the regret of His Majesty's Government, rejected this eminently reasonable condition.

4. His Majesty's Government read the last paragraph of the Holy See's *pro-memoriâ* to mean that the Holy See disagree with the view of His Majesty's Government that the Vatican's attitude has allowed the situation in Malta to develop in such a way as to threaten disturbances in the colony in the event of elections taking place. His Majesty's Government consider that they must form their own judgment in this matter and must adhere to their previous view.

5. His Majesty's Government welcome the assurance that the Vatican "is disposed always and everywhere to do all in its power so that public peace and tranquillity may be maintained and restored." This being so, they regret that the Holy See have not appreciated the necessity of taking practical measures to implement

* No. 36, page 90. † No. 37, page 92.

this assurance. Instead of this they have now refused to take, as far as concerns them, the steps necessary for the restoration of a normal political life in Malta, whilst, before that, they had delayed many months the long promised negotiations for defining the relations between Church and State in the islands, and finally rendered them impossible by attaching a condition as to the personality of the Head of the Maltese Administration, which constitutes nothing less than a claim to interfere in the domestic politics of a British Colony.

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